



KATHLEEN, WITH HER GRAMMARS AND DICTIONARIES, TUMBLING
DOWN-STAIRS.

THE COUSINS AND THEIR FRIENDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYDNEY GREY," ETC.

CHAPTER III.

NEW PLANS.

MEANWHILE there were other people in the house to whom the events of the afternoon, trifling as they were in themselves, had brought back forcibly the bitter sense of loss always more or less present with them. Beatrice saw all dinner time that her father was more than commonly depressed, and when the servants had withdrawn, and the quiet in the next room showed that the children were out of ear-shot, she drew her chair to her father's end of the table, and began to talk to him on the subject she knew was weighing on his mind.

"You can't think how sorry I am that you had such a specimen of the children's unruliness this afternoon, dear papa," she said; "I am afraid you must think that I manage very badly."

"My dear, I was far from thinking of blaming you. You have been better to us all during this last sad year than words can say. It was my own deficiencies I was lamenting over. I am so seldom at home and see so little of the younger ones, that I am afraid when I do interfere I make mistakes. I am not sure that I acted quite judiciously this afternoon."

Beatrice had her doubts on the subject too, and as her father permitted her to speak her mind freely when he and she talked about the children together, she said:

"I was rather sorry you gave Ratty leave to ride, for I am afraid he makes himself very disagreeable to the others in the schoolroom. Magda and Hugh, the two quiet ones, seemed to get the worst of it to-day, and yet I don't think either of them was to blame."

"Did I blame either? I did not mean to be hard on them. I was very much disturbed to see Hugh looking so ill, and vexed to find that he had neglected my wish about his riding. It is, after all, as much disobedience in Hugh to stay in the house when he has been expressly

told to go out, as it would be in Ratcliffe if he went out when he ought to be studying."

"But one can't help admiring Hugh's industry, can one, papa? It is so natural that he should be anxious to keep his place now that he has got to the head of his form; and as all the boys in it are a great deal older than himself, it really is a hard struggle. If he carries off both prizes—as he thinks he shall if you will only let him work as hard as he likes—it really will be a great triumph. Mr. Ward told me himself that he thought Hugh had a good chance, and that he would be the youngest boy who had ever gained such an honour. Can't you understand his getting a little over-anxious and sacrificing other things to his resolution not to fail if he can possibly help it?"

"I understand so well, that I am resolved not to be drawn in to sympathize with the over-anxiety myself. The 'other things,' remember, that you talk of as to be sacrificed, are health and obedience to my wishes. Nay, don't look so grieved, my dear Beatrice, I am not blaming Hugh. I am only considering whether the temptation he is placed in just now is not greater than is good for him—whether I had not better take him out of it."

"Remove Hugh from King's School now that he is gaining such honour there? Papa, you would break his heart."

"I am not afraid of that, and I should save him from breaking down."

"But would you really take Hugh away from the school, and leave Ratcliffe, who does not care for it one bit?"

"No; the system we are going on at present does not please me better for Ratcliffe than for Hugh. He is just as much too careless as Hugh is over-anxious. Hugh is too far before Ratty to be an example, or spur to him. And now that dear Cyril, who seemed to be a link between them, is gone, I fear that Ratty is left too much to follow his own devices, and that he is not improving. What I should like for Ratty would be such a companion as Harry Mannering, who is quite as industrious and conscientious over his work as Hugh, and yet has more of an ordinary boy's tastes and pursuits."

"Would Aunt Lucy let Harry come to us, and go with the boys to King's, do you think? Now that Uncle Charles has got a ship, and will be away some years, I suppose, there can be no one at Carnellen to carry on Harry's education."

"That was not my idea. I may as well tell it to you at once,

Beatrice. I have been turning it over in my mind for some days, and what I have seen and heard this afternoon has almost brought me to a resolution. Your aunt writes to me that there is a large country-house to let about a mile from Carnellen; she wants us to take it for the summer holidays, that she may see something of you all. I am more than half disposed to take it for as long as I can have it—probably a year or two—and break up the London home for that time. You would all be under Aunt Lucy's influence and training, and now that is the best thing I can get for you—the nearest to what you have lost."

"And you, papa?" Beatrice said.

"I should have all the vacations with you, and every day I could snatch from work here. I would promise faithfully to send for my good active nurse, Beatrice, if I were ill, and in a general way I should be comforted in my solitude by knowing that you were all leading a healthy country life under good guidance, instead of—what shall I call it?—getting into mischief here. I have not written to your aunt yet. There are considerations about expense and about the possibility of securing tutors and governesses in that out-of-the-way part of the world to be gone into. So don't speak about it to the children yet. I mention it to you because I think events are tending that way, and I want you to grow accustomed to the idea."

Beatrice did not make any answer. Her head drooped a little for the rest of the evening, and her face looked rather pale. She had hoped to be able to manage the children well enough, and make the house so comfortable that her father would not think it necessary to make any change in his establishment, but allow them all to go on living together as they did when their mother was alive. It was a great pain to her to have to say to herself, as she did many times that evening, "I have failed. I have not done my duty as well as papa hoped I might be able to do it a year ago; it is my want of management that obliges papa to send us away, and live as I know he will not like to live, all alone in this dull house." But Beatrice was too really considerate of her father's feelings to allow him to guess what was passing in her mind, or to trouble him with remonstrances on her own account, or the least attempt at self-justification. She resolved to accept his decision, whatever it might be, without a word, and only let her sense of failure make her more anxious to learn from Aunt Lucy how to manage better when she was trusted again.

Magda, who had been cherishing an injured feeling all the evening, and longing vehemently for an opportunity of justifying herself from her father's charge of exaggeration, would have been very much surprised, and perhaps a little ashamed, if she could have read her sister's thoughts. She noticed Beatrice's dejected look the instant she came up from the dining-room, and she devoted herself for the rest of the evening to waiting upon her favourite sister, and condoling with her on her supposed fatigue. She was in the mood just then to like to fancy herself and Beatrice the suffering victims of the boys' rudeness and her father's unjust partiality to them, and she almost hoped that her father might observe the fuss she was making over Beatrice, and by questioning her as to its cause, give her an opportunity of bringing out the eloquent speech in self-justification she had been busy composing ever since her vanity had been wounded by the little rebuff she had received in the schoolroom.

The Sergeant did not, however, happen to notice what Magda was saying or doing, though he did not as usual settle himself in his chair, and bury himself in a book for the rest of the evening. He went into the inner drawing-room where Hugh was, and took a seat by his side. Hugh had not been resting his head; he had been as busy as Magda in working himself up into a state of mind. Not that he had encouraged Magda in complaining of their father; Hugh never would allow a word against anything his father said or did even from Magda, but he had been exciting himself by counting up the marks which Burnet and Grant were sure to gain over him by his next day's failure, of which he made himself certain, and going over all the chances for and against his keeping his place till the holidays, and gaining the prize on which he had so vehemently set his heart.

He had gone on counting and calculating till he perceived that Magda was no longer listening to him, and then, as soon as the gas was lighted, he had taken a paper of verses out of his pocket and begun to go over them. When he heard his father's step approaching from the outer room he did not slip the paper into the bound volume of *Punch* which was also open before him, as Ratcliffe would probably have done under the same circumstances; he pushed it even a little more prominently forward. The Sergeant laid his hand upon it.

"Is not this work, Hugh?" he said.

"Yes, I know, father," Hugh answered, "but I was going to tell

you—I can do it quite well, and if you did but know how horridly worrying it is to be told to leave off doing a thing when one wants to do it dreadfully, and knows it must be done, you would let me go on.”

“When one *fancies* it must be done *badly* now instead of *well* by and by, when one is fit to do it, you mean. My dear Hugh, I know what that fancy is as well as you do, and it is because I suffer from it so often myself, and know how important it is that you should learn early to control it, that I worry you so horridly as you say. Self-control, you may take my word for it, is a more useful lesson to learn than how to make nonsense or even sense verses.”

“Papa, it is all very well to talk of self-control and all that,” Hugh said, solemnly, “but I do assure you that if I did not work just as hard as I do, now that I have got into this new form, I could not keep up at the top; I should be taken down; I should, indeed.”

“And the world would come to an end, I suppose, if you were taken down?”

Hugh’s fair face crimsoned, and it was all he could do to keep the tears from his eyes, as he answered: “I dare say it seems very silly to you, father, but I think you must have forgotten a little what school is. If one goes in for a thing, one can’t stop short; one must do it thoroughly. If I had gone in for being jolly, good at the games, and that sort of thing, like Ratty, I need not have minded about the work nearly as much, and I dare say I should not; but now, I am expected to get on and I have got into the spirit of it. I always have been first in every form I have been in, and if I were to give up, and go down all at once, I should be neither one thing nor another. I’ll tell you what, father, I just don’t think I could bear it.”

“Then it really is as I feared, Hugh,” the Sergeant said, gravely; “you are not working from love of the work itself, or from a conscientious wish to do whatever you have to do in the best possible way. It is simply to be first and to keep up your reputation with your schoolfellows that you are struggling so hard for. I feared so—a dutiful love of work never makes one restless.”

“Papa,” Hugh said, after a minute’s silence, “you know I do really care more for what you think of me than for what any one else says, but I’ll tell you the truth. I do care for doing my work well for the sake of the work itself, but I confess it is the thought of being taken down by Grant or Burnet that I hate so much, and that makes

me feel so cross when you prevent my doing as much as I like. If you could see them you would understand; Burnet is so horridly cockey—and Grant is in reality such a dolt. His father coaches him up in his work for two or three hours every night, or he would never get through. His father was as vexed as possible when he lost the first place, and would give anything for him to have it again.”

“And your father, Hugh, looks further forward for you, and would prefer seeing in you the brave, calm spirit that can work without vulgar stimulants, and even bear to be put down on occasions without suffering too bitterly, to hearing that you were acknowledged by all England to be the first scholar in King’s school.”

Hugh was silent for a minute, and then he said, still rather petulantly: “Father, I can’t be quiet about it. I must care very much for something, and have something to think constantly about, for now—oh dear! you know—without Cyril at school, and at home everything so dull and horrid.”

The Sergeant put his hand on Hugh’s head. “I know, and I am sorry for you, my poor boy,” he said, softly; and then he walked away—to the other room, and settled himself in his chair and took up his book.

Hugh did not do any more Latin verses, but he did not give his mind to *Punch* either. No one but he, not even Beatrice, would have ventured to have spoken as he had done to their father, and he could not help being a little uneasy. He looked anxiously in his father’s face when he wished him good-night, to see if it was sadder than usual, and was relieved when his father looked up and nodded and turned back to his book again much in his ordinary way.

The conversation had its effect, however; it strengthened Mr. Sergeant Lord in his wish to remove Hugh from the excitement and emulation of a large school, which he thought were just then not suitable for him, and it made the scheme for removing the family to the neighbourhood of Carnellen appear more than ever desirable. Kathleen did something towards deepening her father’s dissatisfaction with the present state of the household, by tumbling down stairs with a pile of grammars and dictionaries in her arms, at half-past three o’clock the next morning, and frightening every one in the house by the noise of her fall. Her father picked her up at the bottom of the third flight of stairs very much bruised, but fortunately with no bones broken. She was extremely penitent when she heard what o’clock it was. She had been

so afraid of over-sleeping herself, she explained, that she had jumped out of bed and dressed without observing how little light there was ; she had promised to call the boys in time for them to study an hour before breakfast, and she would not have been late for the whole world.

The Sergeant did not get to sleep again that night, so he had ample time to think over Mrs. Mannering's letter, and weigh the reasons for and against taking the house near the Welsh town, Caergybi, that was within a walking distance of Carnellen.

CHAPTER IV.

CARNELLEN.

WHAT a delightful spot the garden at Carnellen was about the end of June, when the rose-trees that skirted the borders and clustered in round beds on the lawn were in full bloom, and when there were so many strawberries ripe in the large bed by the west wall that, when one had leave, one might go on gathering and eating for half an hour without making any perceptible difference in the number ! What a delicious scent of beans in flower came with the breeze that blew over the upward sloping fields to the east of the garden ; and how pleasant it was to sit on the west wall (with a cabbage leaf full of strawberries, say, by one's side) listening to the ripple of the waves breaking on the white stony beach below ! The beach at Carnellen was only divided from the garden by a strip of waste sandy ground, rich in treasures of oyster shells, rusty nails, bits of broken spar and torn canvas, quite invaluable for playing at desert island ; and variegated here and there with patches of bright yellow sea-poppies, rest-harrow, and lady's bedstraw, flowers which were found to be much more available for making garlands for Tuppy the donkey, and Frisk the dog, than any that grew in the garden.

It must be confessed, however, that it was not always so pleasant out of doors at Carnellen. There were many days in winter when the west wall would have been a most unsafe place for a small person to sit upon. Then the waves, instead of rippling softly up the beach, thundered high on the waste ground, and sent their salt spray quite over the garden to the hill beyond ; and the wind, instead of bringing sweet scents from the land, brought doleful sounds from far out at sea—

the peal of the great fog bell swinging on St. Kybie's desert island, and sometimes the still more alarming sounds of distress guns fired on the deck of some unfortunate ship in peril among the rocks of that dangerous shore.

On such days, all the Mannerings but Harry were glad that the cottage of Carnellen, though it was but a small place, had so many cosy corners and retreats in it where the elder people could be comfortable, and the younger ones carry on their own devices without being interrupted, or interrupting others.

Little Arthur Mannering found so much to do in the house, and had so many stories and fancies about the different rooms and closets in it, that he sometimes said he did not mind how long the bad weather lasted. It seemed almost absurd to him to talk of being shut up in the house when one might, without opening the front door, travel all the way from India (the hot closet close to the baking oven beneath the back stairs) to the very spot in Nova Zembla (the lumber-room in the roof) where the Russian sailors built a hut and lived for four years.

Arthur's elder brother, Harry Mannering, had also no dislike to stormy weather; but it was by no means because he was particularly fond of staying in the house. He had always, from the time when he could walk alone, been of the opinion of that Robert who comes to such grief in *Struwpeter*—

“When it pours,
It is nicest out of doors.”

and during the past year, while Captain Mannering had been at home, he had been very frequently allowed to indulge his taste for rushing out in the rain. Captain Mannering was sure to put on his bad weather cloak, take his telescope in hand, and pace up and down, in the teeth of a very bad storm, on the look-out for signals, that no time might be lost in warning the crew of the life-boat, should there be a likelihood of their being wanted. Since it had been proved that Harry was stout and resolute enough to brave even the fierce gales that swept over that exposed part of the *Caergybi* shore where Carnellen stood, he had been allowed to accompany his father on these walks; and once, on one glorious, eventful night last November, when a coal-sloop, with three men and a boy in it, had foundered on St. Kybie's rock, he had been so fortunate as to make himself really useful. His father had trusted him to carry a message to a little fishing village on the other

side of the mountain, across which only a Caergybi-bred boy could have safely made his way on a stormy afternoon, to summon some sailors to the aid of the life-boat's crew, several of whom had been disabled in an unsuccessful attempt to get the boat through the breakers. Harry returned with the sailors sooner than his father had thought it possible that he could have brought them; and in reward for his promptitude, he was allowed to remain on the shore all the rest of the evening and far into the night. He saw the life-boat successfully launched at last, and had the privilege of watching it during its perilous voyage through his father's telescope. He was one of the crowd of eager boys and men who rushed through the surf to help, or hinder, the drawing of the boat up the beach, when it returned in triumph with the rescued crew; he gave a hand to help one of the benumbed sailors up the bank on his way to Carnellen; and at last, in the grey dawn of a cold autumn morning, he had entered the house as thoroughly drenched and tired, and battered by wind and rain, as if he had made a voyage through the clouds with Struwelpeter Robert. What could a boy ask more? Well, Harry had something more. His godfather, Admiral Vincent, happened to come the next week to stay a few days at Carnellen. When he heard the story of Harry's services in the shipwreck, he not only said (in a voice loud enough for everybody in Caergybi to hear) that Harry was about the pluckiest little chap he had ever heard of, and that he wished the time were come for giving him a berth in his ship, but when he came to wish them all good-bye, he slipped something mysteriously into Harry's hand, which, on inspection, turned out to be a bright new sovereign. No wonder that the children were fond, all the rest of the winter, of playing at shipwreck, and that Harry was disposed to think every-day summer pleasures somewhat tame and wanting in excitement.

The sovereign was a great source of amusement all the winter, though it came to what most people would have considered an unsatisfactory end. Of course there was no opportunity for spending it at Carnellen; but Harry, who had a great objection to hiding things away, carried it always in his jacket pocket, and got to be very dexterous in spinning it on the edge of the water-butt and on various other critical places which had probably never had a sovereign spun on them before. And then when Alice and Arthur succeeded in persuading him to sit quietly with them in Nova Zembla during blind man's holi-

day, they had most animating discussions about what they should buy when the right time for spending their money came. Never did a sovereign purchase so many ships and cannons, boxes of tools and story-books, or, when Arthur's turn for planning came, do so much good as did Admiral Vincent's present, in the children's fancy, all through the winter. It bought pigs and donkeys for half the poor people round Caergybi, and mended Evan Evans's boat, and bought a blanket for bedridden Widow Price, and a wheel-chair for Betsy's crippled brother. Nobody had a trouble that year for which Arthur could not comfort himself by determining that it should be healed, when spring came, by means of Harry's sovereign.

Perhaps, after all, the best of it was that the sovereign's powers of purchasing were never tested, but remained always something to dream and talk over. Just a week before the time came for the Mannerings' spring visit to Chester, the self-willed piece of money, which had survived so many perils since November, actually was so outrageous as to slip off the tip of Harry's nose, where it was used enough to be balanced, and roll away to some crevice or corner of Nova Zembla, where it never could be discovered afterwards. There was great searching of course, and Harry was a good deal dismayed, when, after the four sailors' hut had been taken down, and all the ice of the frozen regions turned out into the passage, Alice gave it as her opinion that there was no use in looking any longer, for that she was certain the sovereign was nowhere. Harry whistled more than usual for the next few days, and remarked at unexpected times—while he was translating Cæsar with his father, and once in the middle of morning prayers—that he supposed it would be all the same a hundred years hence; a piece of philosophy he had learned from his godfather.

Arthur could not bring himself to give up hope so easily. He still continued to make plans about what they would do when Harry's sovereign turned up, and the other two by degrees fell into the same habit. The (make-believe) ice was never restored to Nova Zembla, it had to be piled up on the top staircase landing, and serve for the South Pole, while the attic was made as like Australia as possible; and Arthur, whenever he had nothing else to do, made an expedition to the gold diggings, and spent an hour or so in looking for Admiral Vincent's great nugget.

Perhaps the two people at Carnellen who were most glad to see the

snowdrops peep up in the borders, and to think that the long winter was over, were Alice Mannering and little Lanty Clancy, the Irish orphan boy, who had been taken into the house out of charity by Captain and Mrs. Mannering, and who was being trained into a useful servant under the cook Betsey's vigilant eye. Alice loved summer rather than winter, because in summer she was better able to share Harry's amusements, and permitted to spend more of her time with him. Her mamma could not let her run out after him into the rain, or stand more than a quarter of an hour at a time watching him skating on the little lake among the hills, over which on winter days there always blew a wind sharp enough (Betsey said) to cut a person in two. But in summer, when the wind was not sharp, but soft, and sweet with the scents of gorze blossoms and flowering thyme, Alice might bring her work to the waterside and sit a whole afternoon, while Harry manœuvred his little ship on the still blue lake; or she might play moderately at cricket with him, when there was no one better to be had, or carry the basket and wait about while he climbed the rocks for gull's eggs, or row out with him to the reef to gather rock samphire.

Alice was not what any one could have called a Tom-boy; she was very fond of girl's plays when she had an opportunity of joining them, and she loved dearly to sit on a stool at her mamma's feet, helping her to mend the boys' clothes, and hearing stories from her about how she and her sisters used to play and talk together, and how dearly they loved each other in their old, dull London home.

Alice had, deep down in the bottom of her heart, a castle in the air about having some day a girl-friend who could be such a constant companion to her, summer and winter, as Aunt Margaret had been to her mamma in her early days; but even in very bad weather, when this wish was strongest, she never meant to put the new girl-friend above Harry in her heart, or imagined for a moment that there could be greater pleasure for her than running about after Harry and helping him, when he would let her. Harry, on his side, had a poorish opinion of girls in general; he always kept out of the way of the young ladies who now and then came to spend a day with Alice, and in the story-books they read together, he contemptuously insisted on skipping the parts that referred to the girls. "What could there be to tell about them?" he used to say; but his views on this subject did not in any way influence his feelings towards Alice. He did not consider her so

much a girl—as just Alice, his good-humoured, bright, obliging sister Alice, who always did as he bid her, and was never in the way.

Lanty Clancy's reasons for liking summer were plain enough to himself, but he would not have been disposed to explain them to any one in the house except, perhaps, Arthur. He was not by any means an industrious boy, and though he had suffered great hardships before he came to live at Carnellen, and gone through more adventures than many people experience in all their lives, he had not been made brave or hardy by them; he disliked having to do little disagreeable things far more than any of the Mannerings did. He did not consider it fun to get wet through, or to be sent out on a misty night to carry a message across the mountain; he used to make all sorts of excuses to avoid going out after nightfall, and hated turning out on a cold morning to sweep the snow away from the door or fetch water from the well so much, that good natured, active Harry would often volunteer to do his work for him, rather than hear him shiver and groan over it. Betsey used to say that she had no sort of patience with a servant boy who could see his young master do his work for him, while he sat cowering over the fire like a whipped dog. Betsey had a great knack of making offensive comparisons when she was a little out of humour; and Arthur rather teased and puzzled her sometimes, by wanting to know exactly how they came into her head. In summer there were many places where Lanty could lounge and go to sleep comfortably without being called a whipped dog; and as there were also fewer things he could be trusted to do at that season of the year, he contrived to pass a good many hours of every day exactly as he liked, in leaning with his arms folded over the wicket-gate at the end of the kitchen-garden, now and then throwing a stone awkwardly at the sheep feeding on the hill, but generally remaining perfectly still, staring up at the clouds with his mouth wide open—to catch larks, Betsey supposed, though Arthur had taken some pains to assure her that, on being questioned, Lanty had expressly denied having any such reason for opening his mouth.

Luckily for Lanty Clancy, Captain and Mrs. Mannering, unlike Betsey, had a great deal of patience with him. They took some trouble to explain to the children how natural it was that the pains and privations, of which he had had more than his share in his short life, should have made him more afraid of pain and less capable of enjoying

exercise and healthy work than a happy, well brought-up boy would be; and they also said that they could not expect him to be as obedient and truthful as their own children, since he had never known the loving tender care which teaches happy children to trust to, and confide in, their elders. The young Mannerings, though they were always kind to Lanty, needed to be reminded now and then of the special reasons there were for making allowance for him, for it must be confessed that they, as well as Betsey, often found him very incomprehensible and provoking.

He had seemed quite like the hero of a story when he first came to Carnellen. He was the sole survivor of the crew of a merchant ship which had gone down, with all hands on board, close to the Caergybi reef one stormy winter's night two years ago. Captain Mannering, the morning after the wreck, had picked Lanty out of the waves when he was all but drowned, and carried him home to Carnellen to be restored to life by Mrs. Mannering's and Betsey's care. When he was able to give an account of himself, and the children learned that he had already made two voyages to South America, and one in the Northern seas, though he was (by his own account) a year younger than Harry, they were disposed to feel great respect for him, and quite expected he would have so many delightful real adventures to tell them, that they never should want any new story-books, or care to invent make-believes for themselves. They could not help being rather disgusted when they found that Lanty had only one answer to give to all their questions, and that he never could be persuaded or coaxed to enlarge on the first meagre account he gave of himself.

"It's the thruth I'm telling ye, Master Harry, and shure I can't say no other. It was just a dirty bit of a ship I was upon, bad luck to it; and the say all round, and the blue sky up above; and they moved, the say and the sky, and the ship was tossed up and down between 'em for all one like as Master Arthur tosses his ball; and one day likely, I was beaten black and blue, and the next day I was knocked on the head, and every day I was starved and kicked, and wished myself back in ould Ireland in the bit of a place where I lived with father and mother before (oh, my sorrow!) they died in the black fever year, the blessed saints in heaven rest their souls, or I'd have been with Uncle Mike in Cork again, though the year I lived with him we had hard times of it, all of us. It was Uncle Mike that

took me down to the ship and gave me up to the say captain. He was not an Englishman even, to say nothing of an Irishman, just something of a Portegee, who did not so much as know how to speak. 'And it's yerself that's in luck, Lanty,' says Uncle Mike, just as he went away. 'Yer going to have yer fill of the best of victuals every day of yer life, and no hard work to do for them, and fine sights to be seen, and I wish it was meself that was going instead of you,' says he; and then he turned round and went ashore, and the mate spoke gruff to me as I was wiping my eyes, and that's the last I've seen of kith or kin of my own. Whenever we came to land, I looked out, thinking maybe it was Cork we'd got to, and I should see Uncle Mike on the pier looking out for me; but shure we never did come to Cork at all, but always to somewhere else, and I'd no heart for looking at the outlandish sights you ask about; they might be there likely, but I never heeded them. It's a sorry cruel restless thing, ye may take my word for it, the salt say, Master Harry, and it will never get Lanty Clancy to go on it again, let it look ever so blue and sunny and smiling on a summer's day; he knows the treacherous ways of it, he does."

Lanty's face used often to grow quite white with anger or fear as he finished his story, always in the same words, and he would turn and shake his fists at the sea, as if it understood him.

The hearing this over and over again was rather tiresome to Harry, who considered a seafaring life the happiest and most glorious in the whole world. When he found that it was quite impossible to change Lanty's opinion, or make him understand the difference between a little merchant-ship commanded by a Portuguese captain and an English man-of-war, with such officers as his father or Admiral Vincent on board, he left off questioning him on his seafaring experiences, and bestowed no more attention on him than if he had never in his life stirred beyond the Carnellen garden.

Alice did not care to talk much to Lanty after Harry had pronounced him to be no better than a land-lubber; but Arthur's interest and curiosity never abated. He would often sit cross-legged on the ground by the gate over which Lanty leaned, looking up as intently into Lanty's face as Lanty looked at the sky. Arthur fancied that Lanty must be thinking about his dead father and mother, or about the cruel sea-captain, and his comrades on board the ship who were lying drowned at the bottom of the sea, and he felt very sorry for him—

though in reality Lanty was only staring at the clouds, and wondering whether Betsey meant to make girdle-cakes for tea, or whether Evan Evans would make him dig the potato-bed over again or not. Sometimes Arthur was too busy imagining what Lanty was thinking and feeling to want to talk to him, but at other times he did his best to draw him into conversation, for it was by no means Arthur's way to sit silent for long together. When Arthur spoke, Lanty generally left off staring at the sky, and fixed his great grey eyes on Arthur's face; but though he seemed to be listening very earnestly, the remarks he put in now and then seldom struck Arthur as having much to do with the subject he wanted him to talk about. For instance, when Arthur had brought the atlas out into the garden, and was trying patiently to explain the shape of the world to Lanty, and to make him see how impossible it was that he could have got to Cork by sailing from Cork straight across the Atlantic Ocean, Lanty would suddenly break in with a story of how his great-uncle, Patrick O'Toole, met one of the good people at a cross-road one midsummer night, and how he was taken right through the earth blindfold to the beautifullest place ever heard tell of, and brought back with his pockets full of fairy gold. Or when Arthur turned the conversation on the moon and stars, and tried to make Lanty give him his opinion as to whether they were inhabited or not, instead of answering, Lanty would begin to describe a cheese as big as the moon, or likely even a bit bigger, which his mother had had given her at Ballyshannon fair for saving the grocer's little daughter from being run over by a runaway jaunting-car.

There was no use in Arthur's running into the house and bringing out his favourite "Celestial Scenery," and reading in a loud distinct voice the interesting account of the moon to be found there. Lanty listened quite to the end, and said it was "fine reading intirely, and Master Arthur spoke it out beautiful to be shure;" but he always went back to his first idea about the moon being exactly like his mother's cheese, only mayhap a little harder and more shiny-like, and he never could understand Arthur's objection to the comparison. "Shure it was an ilegant cheese, and half the neighbours of Castle Cary had come in to help 'em to ate it."

[*To be continued.*]

THE WIVES OF BRIXHAM.

YOU see the gentle water,
 How silently it floats,
 How cautiously, how steadily
 It moves the sleepy boats;
 And all the little loops of pearl
 It strews along the sand,
 Steal out as leisurely as leaves
 When summer is at hand.

But you know it can be angry,
 And thunder from its rest,
 When the stormy taunts of winter
 Are flying at its breast;
 And if you like to listen,
 And draw your chairs around,
 I'll tell you what it did one night,
 When you were sleeping sound.

The merry boats of Brixham
 Go out to search the seas;
 A staunch and sturdy fleet are they,
 Who love a swinging breeze;
 And along the woods of Devon,
 And the silver cliffs of Wales,
 You may see, when summer evenings
 fall,
 The light upon their sails.

But when the year grows darker,
 And grey winds hunt the foam,
 They go back to little Brixham,
 And ply their toils at home;
 And so it chanced, one winter's day,
 When the wind began to roar,
 That all the men were out at sea,
 And all the wives on shore.

Then as the storm grew fiercer,
 The women's cheeks grew white;—
 It was fiercer through the twilight,
 And fiercest in the night;
 The strong clouds set themselves like
 ice,
 With not a star to melt,
 And the blackness of the darkness
 Was something to be felt.

The wind, like an assassin,
 Went on its secret way,
 And struck a hundred barks adrift
 To reel about the bay;
 They meet, they crash—God keep
 the men!
 God give a moment's light!
 There is nothing but the tumult,
 And the tempest, and the night.



THEY HEAPED A GREAT FIRE ON THE PIER.

The men on shore were trembling,
 They grieved for what they knew;
 What do you think the women did?
 Love taught them what to do.
 Up spoke a wife, "We've beds at
 home—
 We'll burn them for a light—
 Give us the men and the bare
 ground—
 We want no more to-night."

They took the grandame's blanket,
 Who shivered and bade them go;
 They took the baby's pillow,
 Who could not say them no;
 And they heaped a great fire on the
 pier,
 And knew not all the while
 If they were heaping a bonfire,
 Or only a funeral pile.

And, fed with precious food, the
 flame
 Shone bravely on the black,
 Till a cry went through the people,
 "A boat is coming back!"
 Staggering dimly through the fog,
 They see and then they doubt—
 But when the first prow strikes the
 pier,
 Cannot you hear them shout?

Then, all along the breadth of flame
 Dark figures shrieked and ran,
 With "Child here comes your
 father!"
 Or "Wife, is this your man?"
 And faint feet touch the welcome
 stone
 And stay a little while,
 And kisses drop from frozen lips
 Too tired to speak or smile.

So one by one they struggled in,
 All that the sea would spare—
 We will not reckon through our
 tears
 The names that were not there;
 But some went home, without a bed,
 When all the tale was told,
 Who were too cold with sorrow
 To know the night was cold.

And this is what the men must do
 Who work in wind and foam,
 And this is what the women bear
 Who watch for them at home;
 So, when you see a Brixham boat
 Go out to meet the gales,
 Think of the Love that travels
 Like Light upon her sails!

M. B. S.

MRS. OVERTHEWAY'S REMEMBRANCES.

MRS. MOSS.

“**I** REMEMBER,” said Mrs. Overtheday, “old as I am, I remember distinctly many of the unrecognised vexations, longings, and disappointments of childhood. By unrecognised, I mean those vexations, longings, and disappointments which could not be understood by nurses, are not confided even to mothers, and through which, even in our cradles, we become subject to that law of humanity which gives to every heart its own secret bitterness to be endured alone. These are they which sometimes outlive weightier memories, and produce life-long impressions disproportionate to their value; but oftener, perhaps, are washed away by the advancing tide of time,—the vexations, longings, and disappointments of the next period of our lives. These are they which are apt to be forgotten too soon to benefit our children, and which in the forgetting make childhood all bright to look back upon, and foster that happy fancy that there is one division of mortal life in which greedy desire, unfulfilled purpose, envy, sorrow, weariness, and satiety, have no part, by which every man believes himself at least to have been happy as a child.

“My childhood on the whole was a very happy one. The story that I am about to relate is only a fragment of it.

“As I look into the fire, and the hot coals shape themselves into a thousand memories of the past, I seem to be staring with childish eyes at a board that stares back at me out of a larch plantation, and gives notice that ‘This House is to Let.’ Then, again, I seem to peep through rusty iron gates at the house itself—an old red house, with large windows, through which one could see the white shutters that were always closed. To look at this house, though only with my mind’s eye, recalls the feeling of mysterious interest with which I looked at it fifty years ago, and brings back the almost oppressive happiness of a certain day, when Sarah, having business with the couple who kept the empty manor, took me with her, and left me to explore the grounds whilst she visited her friends.

“Next to a companion with that rare sympathy of mind to mind, that

exceptional coincidence of tastes, which binds some few friendships in a chain of mesmeric links, supplanting all the complacencies of love by intuition, is a companion whose desires and occupations are in harmony, if not in unison, with one's own. That friend whom the long patience of the angler does not chafe, the protracted pleasures of the sketcher do not weary, because time flies as swiftly with him while he pores over his book or devoutly seeks botanical specimens through the artist's middle distance; that friend, in short—that valuable friend—who is blessed with the great and good quality of riding a hobby of his own, and the greater and better quality of allowing other people to ride theirs.

“I did not think out all this fifty years ago, neither were the tastes of that excellent housemaid, Sarah, quite on a level with those of which I have spoken, but I remember feeling the full comfort of the fact that Sarah's love for friendly gossip was quite as ardent as mine for romantic discovery, that she was disposed to linger quite as long to chat as I to explore, and that she no more expected me to sit wearily through her kitchen confidences, than I imagined that she would give a long afternoon to sharing my day-dreams in the gardens of the deserted manor.

“We had ridden our respective hobbies till nearly tea-time before she appeared.

“‘I'm afraid you must be tired of waiting, Miss Mary,’ said she.

“‘Tired!’ I exclaimed, ‘not in the least. I have been so happy, and I am so much obliged to you, Sarah.’

“Need I say why I was so happy that afternoon? Surely most people have felt—at least in childhood—the fascination of deserted gardens, uninhabited houses, ruined churches. They have that advantage over what is familiar and in use that undiscovered regions have over the comfortable one that the traveller leaves to explore them, that the secret which does not concern me has over the facts which do, that what we wish for has over what we possess.

“If you, my dear, were to open one of those drawers, and find Nurse's Sunday dress folded up in the corner, it would hardly amuse you; but if, instead thereof, you found a dress with a long stiff boddice, square at the neck, and ruffled round the sleeves, such as you have seen in old pictures, no matter how old or useless it might be, it would shed round it an atmosphere of delightful and mysterious

speculations. This curiosity, these fancies, roused by the ancient dress, whose wearer has passed away, are awakened equally by empty houses where some one must once have lived, though his place knows him no more. It was so with the manor. How often had I peeped through the gates, catching sight of garden walks, and wondering whither they led, and who had walked in them; seeing that the shutters behind one window were partly open, and longing to look in.

“To-day I had been in the walks and peeped through the window. This was the happiness.

“Through the window I had seen a large hall with a marble floor and broad stone stairs winding into unknown regions. By the walks I had arrived at the locked door of the kitchen garden, at a small wood or wilderness of endless delights (including a broken swing), and at a dilapidated summer-house. I had wandered over the spongy lawn, which was cut into a long green promenade by high clipt yew-hedges, walking between which, in olden times, the ladies grew erect and stately, as plants among brushwood stretch up to air and light.

“Finally, I had brought away such relics as it seemed to me that honesty would allow. I had found half a rusty pair of scissors in the summer-house. Perhaps some fair lady of former days had lost them here, and swept distractedly up and down the long walks seeking them. Perhaps they were a present, and she had given a luck-penny for them, lest they should cut love. Sarah said the housekeeper might have dropped them there; but Sarah was not a person of sentiment. I did not shew her the marble I found by the hedge, the acorn I picked up in the park, nor a puny pansy which, half way back to a wild heartsease, had touched me as a pathetic memorial of better days. When I got home, I put the scissors, the marble, and the pansy, into a box. The acorn I hung in a bottle of water—it was to be an oak-tree.

“Properly speaking, I was not at home just then, but on a visit to my grandmother and a married aunt without children who lived with her. A fever had broken out in my own home, and my visit here had been prolonged to keep me out of the way of infection. I was very happy and comfortable except for one signal vexation, which was this:

“I slept on a little bed in what had once been the nursery, a large room which was now used as a workroom. A great deal of sewing was done in

my grandmother's house, and the sewing-maid and at least one other of the servants sat there every evening. A red silk screen was put before my bed to shield me from the candle-light, and I was supposed to be asleep when they came up-stairs. But I never remember to have been otherwise than wide awake, nervously awake, wearily awake. This was the vexation. I was not a strong child, and had a very excitable brain; and the torture that it was to hear those maids gossiping on the other side of the dim red light of my screen I cannot well describe, but I do most distinctly remember. I tossed till the clothes got hot, and threw them off till I grew cold, and stopped my ears, and pulled the sheet over my face, and tried not to listen, and listened in spite of all. They told long stories, and made many jokes that I couldn't understand; sometimes I heard names that I knew, and fancied I had learnt some wonderful secret. Sometimes, on the contrary, I made noises to intimate that I was awake, when one of them would rearrange my glaring screen, and advise me to go to sleep, and then they talked in whispers, which was more distracting still.

"One evening—some months after my ramble round the manor—the maids went out to tea, and I lay in peaceful silence watching the shadows which crept noiselessly about the room as the fire blazed, and wishing Sarah and her colleagues nothing less than a month of uninterrupted tea-parties. I was almost asleep when Aunt Harriet came into the room. She brought a candle, put up my screen (the red screen again!) and went to the work table. She had not been rustling with the work things for many minutes when my grandmother followed her, and shut the door with an air which seemed to promise a long stay. She also gave a shove to my screen, and then the following conversation began:

"‘I have been to Lady Sutfield's to-day, Harriet.’

"‘Indeed, ma'am.’ But my aunt respectfully continued her work, as I could hear by the scraping of the scissors along the table.

"‘I heard some news there. The manor is let.’

"‘I almost jumped in my bed, and Aunt Harriet's scissors paused.

"‘Let, ma'am! To whom?’

"‘To a Mrs. Moss. You must have heard me speak of her. I knew her years ago, when we were both young women. Anastatia Eden, she was then.’

"‘I could hear my aunt move to the fire, and sit down.

“ ‘The beautiful Miss Eden? Whom did she marry at last? Was there not some love affair of hers that you knew about?’

“ ‘Her love-affairs were endless. But you mean Mr. Sandford. She treated him very ill—very ill.’

“ ‘There was a pause, while the fire crackled in the silence; and then, to the infinite satisfaction of my curiosity, Aunt Harriet said:

“ ‘I’ve forgotten the story, ma’am. He was poor, was he not?’

“ ‘He had quite enough to marry on,’ my grandmother answered, energetically; ‘but he was not a great match. It was an old story, my dear. The world! The world! The world! I remember sitting up with Anastatia after a ball, where he had been at her side all the evening. We supped hot posset, and talked of our partners. Ah, dear!’ And here my grandmother heaved a sigh; partly, perhaps because of the follies of youth, and partly, perhaps, because youth had gone, and could come back no more.

“ ‘Anastatia talked of him,’ she continued. ‘I remember her asking me if “her man” were not a pretty fellow, and if he had not sweet blue eyes and the greatest simplicity I ever knew but in a child. It was true enough; and he was a great deal more than that—a great deal more than she ever understood. Poor Anastatia! I advised her to marry him, but she seemed to look on that as impossible. I remember her saying that it would be different if she were not an acknowledged beauty; but it was expected that she would marry well, and he was comparatively poor, and not even singular. He was accomplished, and the soul of honour, but simple, provokingly simple, with no pretensions to carry off the toast of a county. My dear, if he had been notorious in any way—for dissipation, for brawling, for extravagance—I believe it would have satisfied the gaping world, and he would have had a chance. But there was nothing to talk about, and Anastatia had not the courage to take him for himself. She had the world at her feet, and paid for it by being bound by its opinion.’

“ ‘Here my grandmother, who was apt to moralize, especially when relating biographies of young ladies, gave another sigh.

“ ‘Then why did she encourage him?’ inquired Aunt Harriet; who also moralized, but with more of indignation and less of philosophy.

“ ‘I believe she loved him in spite of herself; but at the last when he offered, she turned prudent and refused him.’

“ ‘Poor man! Did he ever marry?’

“ ‘Yes, and very happily—a charming woman. But the strange part of the story is, that he came quite unexpectedly into a large property that was in his family.’

“ ‘Did he? Then he would have been as good a match as most of her admirers?’

“ ‘Better. It was a fine estate. Poor Anastatia!’

“ ‘Serve her right,’ said my aunt, shortly.

“ ‘She was very beautiful,’ my grandmother gently recommenced. She said this, not precisely as an excuse, but with something of the sort in her tone. ‘Very beautiful! How stately she did look that night, to be sure! She did not paint, and her complexion (a shade too high by day) was perfection by candlelight. I can see her now, my dear, as she stood up for a minuet with him. We wore hoops, then; and she had a white brocade petticoat, embroidered with pink rosebuds, and a train and bodice of pea-green satin, and green satin shoes with pink heels. You never saw anything more lovely than that brocade. A rich old aunt had given it to her. The shades of the rosebuds were exquisite. I embroidered the rosebuds on that salmon-coloured cushion down-stairs from a piece that Anastatia gave me as a pattern. Dear me! What a dress it was, and how lovely she looked in it! Her eyes were black, a thing you rarely see, and they shone and glittered under her powdered hair. She had a delicately curved nose; splendid teeth, too, and showed them when she smiled. Then such a lovely throat, and beautifully-shaped arms! I don’t know how it is, my dear Harriet,’ added my grandmother, thoughtfully, ‘but you don’t see the splendid women now-a-days that there were when I was young. There are plenty of pretty, lively girls (rather too lively, in my old-fashioned judgment), but not the real stately beauty that it was worth a twenty miles drive, there and back, just to see, at one of the old county balls.’

“ My aunt sniffed, partly from a depressing consciousness of being one of a degenerate generation, and of a limited experience in the matter of county balls; partly also to express her conviction that principle is above beauty. She said:

“ ‘Then Miss Eden married, ma’am?’

“ ‘Yes, rather late, Mr. Moss; a wealthy Indian merchant, I believe. She lost all her children, I know, one after another, and then he died. Poor Anastatia! It seems like yesterday. And to think she should be coming here!’

"My grandmother sighed again, and I held my breath, hoping for some further particulars of the lovely heroine of this romance. But I was disappointed. My uncle's voice at this moment called loudly from below, and Aunt Harriet hurried off with a conscious meritoriousness about her, becoming a lady who had married the right man, and took great care of him.

" 'Supper, ma'am, I think,' she said, as she left the room.

"My grandmother sat still by the fire, sighing gently now and then, and I lay making up my mind to brave all and tell her that I was awake. In the first place (although I was not intentionally eaves-dropping, and my being awake was certainly not my fault), I felt rather uneasy at having overheard what I knew was not intended for my hearing. Besides this, I wanted to hear some more stories of the lovely Mrs. Moss, and to ask how soon she would come to the manor. After a few seconds my grandmother rose and toddled across the room. I made an effort, and spoke just above my breath :

" 'Granny !'

"But my grandmother was rather deaf. Moreover, my voice may have been drowned in the heavy sigh with which she closed the nursery door.

"The room was empty again ; the glare of the red screen was tenderly subdued in the firelight ; but for all this I did not go to sleep. I took advantage of my freedom to sit up in bed, toss my hair from my forehead, and clasping my knees with my arms, to rock myself and think. My thoughts had one object ; my whole mind was filled with one image—Mrs. Moss. The future inhabitant of my dear deserted Manor would, under any circumstances, have been an interesting subject for my fancies. The favoured individual whose daily walk might be between the yew hedges on that elastic lawn ; who should eat, drink, and sleep through the common-place hours of this present time behind those mystical white shutters ! But when the individual added to this felicitous dispensation of fortune the personal attributes of unparalleled beauty and pea-green satin ; of having worn hoops, high heels, and powder ; of countless lovers, and white brocade with pink rosebuds ;—well might I sit, my brain whirling with anticipation, as I thought : 'She is coming here : I shall see her !' For though, of course, I knew that having lived in those (so to speak) pre-historic times when my grandmother was young, Mrs. Moss must now be an old woman ; yet,

strange as it may seem, my dear, I do assure you that I never realized the fact. I thought of her as I had heard of her—young and beautiful—and modelled my hopes accordingly.

“Most people’s day-dreams take, sooner or later, a selfish turn. I seemed to identify myself with the beautiful Anastatia. I thought of the ball as one looks back to the past. I fancied myself moving through the *minuet de la cour*, whose stately paces scarcely made the silken rosebuds rustle. I rejected *en masse* countless suitors of fabulous wealth and nobility; but when it came to Mr. Sandford, I could feel with Miss Eden no more. My grandmother had said that she loved him; that she encouraged him, and that she gave him up for money. It was a mystery! In her place, I thought, I would have danced every dance with him; I would have knitted for him in winter, and gathered flowers for him in the summer hedges. To whom should one be most kind, if not to those whom one most loves? To love, and take pleasure in giving pain—to balance a true heart and clear blue eyes against money, and prefer money—was not at that time comprehensible by me. I pondered, and (so to speak) spread out the subject before my mind, and sat in judgment upon it.

“Money—that is, golden guineas (my grandmother had given me one on my birthday), crowns, shillings, sixpences, pennies, halfpennies, farthings; and when you come to consider how many things a guinea judiciously expended in a toy-shop will procure, you see that money is a great thing, especially if you have the full control of it, and are not obliged to spend it on anything useful.

“On the other hand, those whom you love and who love you—not in childhood, thank God, the smallest part of one’s acquaintance.

“I made a list on my own account. It began with my mother, and ended with my yellow cat. (It included a crusty old gardener, who was at times, especially in the spring, so particularly cross that I might have been tempted to exchange him for the undisputed possession of that stock of seeds, tools, and flower-pots, which formed our chief subject of dispute. But this is a digression.) I took the lowest. Could I part with Sandy Tom for any money, or for anything that money would buy? I thought of a speaking doll, a miniature piano, a tiny carriage drawn by four yellow mastiffs, of a fairy purse that should never be empty, with all that might thereby be given to others or kept for oneself: and then I thought of Sandy Tom—of his large,

round, soft head ; his fine eyes (they were yellow, not blue, and glared with infinite tenderness) ; his melodious purr ; his expressive whiskers ; his unutterable tail.

“Love rose up as an impulse, an instinct ; it would not be doubted, it utterly refused to be spread out to question.

“ ‘Oh, Puss !’ I thought, ‘if you could but leap on to the bed at this moment I would explain it all to our mutual comprehension and satisfaction. My dear Sandy,’ I would say, ‘with you to lie on the cushioned seat, a nice little carriage, and four yellow mastiffs, would be perfection ; but as to comparing what I love—to wit, you, Sandy !—with what I want—to wit, four yellow mastiffs and a great many other things besides—I should as soon think of cutting off your tail to dust the doll’s house with.’ Alas ! Sandy Tom was at home ; I could only imagine the gentle rub of the head with which he would have assented. Meanwhile, I made up my mind firmly on one point. My grandmother was wrong. Miss Anastatia Eden had not loved Mr. Sandford.

CORAL.

NOW for the Coral Islands !

But here I may possibly be asked “How do you know anything about them ? Have you seen them yourself ? Were you ever there ?”

No. And yet I am not going to copy out accounts from books which you could as easily read for yourselves. We people who stay at home have sometimes friends who not only travel, but are able and willing, when asked, to use their eyes in the particular direction desired by those they leave behind. And so it comes to pass that I have before me two accounts of the Coral Islands from eye-witnesses. One, a quite unscientific friend, but full of kind spirit and observing intelligence, who lately made an expedition from Rangoon to the Andaman Islands in search of the sea-weeds and zoophytes he had been asked to look after ; the other scientific, and knowing the meaning of what he saw as he canoed over Coral-island wonders in the Pacific. And these two accounts it shall be my business to make intelligible to young readers.

But first, I recommend a peep into the map of Asia, that it may be seen whereabouts the Andaman Islands are : viz., south-east in the

Bay of Bengal, within the tropics therefore. I may add, that my friend (one of the chaplains to the forces in India) was warned at Moulmein (whence he sailed) that he would find no sea-weeds at the Andaman Islands; but knowing the worthlessness, generally, of such reports, having also friends there, and having set his mind upon going, he went; and after a month or more's prowling and hunting, wrote thus on board the Bremen Barque "America," on his return voyage:—

"If you could but see the wonders and beauties of this part of the world! A coral bed and the extraordinary animals in it! Huge creatures like snakes, only with a thing like a little sea-anemone where the head ought to be: large sea-slugs, which the Chinamen eat; sea-anemones, too, of all hues and sizes, some six, seven, eight, or more inches across, &c., &c. But the coral! oh, it is so lovely—pink, green, lilac, purple, blue, brown, all kinds; some branchy with thick branches, others delicate and fine: others like those flat fungi which grow out of trees in England, only twenty times as large, and from only a quarter of an inch thick at the edge to an inch or so in the middle. But" (let the reader notice this *but*) "of course when it is taken out of the water all the beautiful colours die and fade, and it smells abominably."

Here was a mystery indeed, and these Andaman corals must certainly be very different from the red coral of the Mediterranean, which is as bright round the neck of a child as when three hundred feet deep in the water.

But hear the unscientific friend further. "How I wish I could describe one coral pool, so that you could form an idea of its beauty! Imagine a deep little bay (under water, of course) in the rock, all the rock being coral of every shape and hue. Fancy the most beautiful pieces you ever saw in a museum collected together, with many others besides, they forming the bay; and at the bottom of the clearest water imaginable, other coral lumps of all colours; among them monster star fish a foot in diameter, sky blue and brilliant scarlet; fish, too, of most curious shapes and colours—one more like feathers than any thing else, and so airy and beautiful that it has the name of Angel fish, coloured white, lilac, brown, and black, in shades and bands; some others half black, half white; some all black with white tails; some, again, mottled brown; which last *run* out of the water and skip up the rocks, and there sit and stare at you. No doubt these are the climbing fish, described as so great a curiosity in the 'Illustrated:' but every puddle,

fresh and salt, is full of them here; and besides these, such curious shells, and in nooks in the coral, sea-urchins ——:"

But here we break off, for the letter has wandered far from our subject—Coral—and we must not be tempted further into an account of edible birds' nests. On the contrary, you shall now hear the scientific friend's explanation of the matter, for his description both corroborates and explains.

"As to the corals of the Andaman islands and of the Pacific reefs, &c.," he says, "they are of quite a different sort from the precious coral (*corallium rubrum*). Their coral is *external*, and naturally *white* or dirty coloured. All the beautiful colours you hear described, and which are very vivid and varied, come from the *living animal*, when it peeps through its skeleton. When it retreats within, or when it dies, they disappear, and you have the plain white coral. Don't believe anyone who says otherwise! Nothing can be more lovely than to *canoe* over a coral bed at some ten to fifteen feet below you; for the fishes that ply among the branches are often as brightly tinted with red, blue, violet, and yellow, as are the coral animals themselves."

Our young readers can follow this, surely. Here is what it amounts to. In the Mediterranean coral, the polyp animals grow a hard inside skeleton, as we ourselves do, and they "live and move and have their being" in the fleshy over-coat which covers it, somewhat as our flesh covers our bones. In the tropical corals, on the contrary, the polyps grow their skeleton outside, as a snail does his, and within it they have all their separate little homes; each polyp growing its particular cell for its own particular use, but all combining to build up one large, common pile, city or territory, as the case may be. But you may certainly call it a territory in the case of coral reefs* extending many hundreds of miles. As to the polyps, they differ considerably in size and shape, as do the corals themselves, but these distinctions are unimportant in explaining the general system. Even the dead coral specimens betray the truth of these statements. Look at the magnificent pieces you sometimes see under glass cases on a drawing-room table, and are sure to find in any good museum, and the commonest attention will show you that, instead of having a fine marbly smooth surface like the precious coral of your beads, it is riddled or marked all over with holes. Let the coral mass be of what size or shape it may, branched like a

* A "reef" is a ridge or ledge of rock.

shrub, flat like a fungus, as lately described, or round like a large plum pudding, as is not uncommon, the one character I mention never fails, the surface is perforated in all directions. I do not say what the holes are like, for they vary with the species of coral. In some cases, you might think a busy hand had punched beautiful little stars all over it with a sharp instrument. At other times, you see meandering lines of punctures, which seem made at random, yet combine to form as regular a pattern over the huge plum pudding lump as could have been marked out for canvas work; or, looking at the deep fissures in the mushroom coral, you might fancy the fairies must have quarrelled with their thrones in the fields, and flung them to the bottom of the sea, where they had turned into milk-white petrifications.

Now, all these holes or perforations, of whatever size and sort they may be, tell, unmistakeably, the tale you have been listening to. They were once the cell-homes of the living, flower-like polyps, which built and animated the whole coral mass: the "portals" where these appeared in such beauty "like a happy assemblage of living flowers,"* when they spread out their coloured tentacles for food or enjoyment in the depths of tropical seas!

This is a mere sketch of a subject full of interest, and may lead to many inquiries which cannot be answered here. But such of our young readers as care to enter further into the history of coral reef formation, will find a pleasant paper on the subject in "Hardwicke's Science Gossip" (October, 1865). There the writer begins at the very beginning, and tells how a coral gemmule first settles down on a rock and begins to grow, secreting the milky (really *limy*) fluid which is soon to harden round him into the first house of the marvellous city, and how as he goes on eating he goes on building, ascending upwards as his house ascends, "keeping his mouth below the top of the wall, but high enough to enable him to thrust out his tentacula." And how, countless numbers of such coral buds, building side by side on one plan by one instinct, there arise those vast specimens of architecture—coral reefs, which may in time form continents.

Let me conclude with the words which Hogarth, the painter, wrote to Ellis, the naturalist, about the zoophytes of our British shores:—"When I have the pleasure of seeing you next, we will sit down, *nay kneel down if you will*, and admire these things."

* Landsborough's Introduction to Hist. of Br. Zoophytes.

THE PRINCE OF SLEONA.

NEXT day he commenced a most careful search for the will; but though he left no nook or corner unexplored, both at the palace at Sleona and at the summer residence at Praona, where his father had spent much of his time in former years, no will could be found.

So his uncle was king. The nation hated him, and he knew it. So he tried to restrain his evil nature with the view of becoming popular, and thus his rule was less obnoxious than might have been expected. Prince Loroio remained at Praona. All his bad symptoms, partially forgotten for a time in the tumult of events, came back with double force when the fruitless search for the will was at an end; and one day, when he was very ill and wretched, his uncle sent to require his presence at the palace.

And when he arrived there, he felt a strange pang at the sight of his uncle occupying his father's apartments and ruling over the kingdom which he felt should be his own. But this feeling he had to swallow down and make the best of, as there seemed to be no help for it.

It was evening when he arrived, and the court was seated at table. The king sat in the middle, and the number of guests was small. The old courtly gaiety, the flow of genial talk, which used to pervade that table in former days, when all the most celebrated people in the kingdom were collected there—when all the notabilities of science, literature, and art used to assemble, and contribute the varied stores of their knowledge to each other in animated and delightful discourse, while the old king, the prince of hosts, did exactly what was fitting to keep the whole in harmonious and perfect flow—all this was at an end. The only persons present were a few stiff old nobles and the palace functionaries on duty. The late king had always several dogs round his chair, as he was fond of them—hounds and little spaniels, and wise wiry-haired dogs. The present ruler had them all kicked out, as he hated them; all but one bloodhound, who wouldn't be kicked out, and of whom every one was afraid, particularly the king himself. The dog hated the king, but, being rather old, he did not choose to alter

his habitudes, and would take his old place in the hall; so the king, making a virtue of necessity, had tried to get up a pretence of being fond of him, and had conquered his dread and terror of him, so far as once to go up to him, holding out his hand as if he would pat him, and saying, "Poor old dog, poor fel—low, then!" &c. The dog, which had previously only eyed him with contemptuous aversion, glared upon him all of a sudden with his red eyes, and thundered out a low growl, so ominous that the king jumped away from him in great alarm, and in a most undignified manner, and took very good care never to go near him more. When Prince Loroio came in, this dog came to him, and stood up on him with his powerful paws, and licked him, and was so happy that he couldn't keep still for some time; and when the prince was seated at the king's right hand (in virtue of his rank), the bloodhound put his head on his knee, and sat there with his eyes fixed on his face, growling inwardly whenever the king spoke to him. The king hated this, for he would have given a great deal if this dog would have taken to him, much as he feared him. He was so discomposed by the dog's growls, that he said as little as possible to the prince that evening, beyond stating that he wished for an interview on important matters the next forenoon. So the prince retired for the night to his own old apartments, and the bloodhound went with him.

The next forenoon the uncle and nephew were closeted together alone in the audience chamber, and the uncle began as follows:

"No one can better understand than I, dear nephew"—(he jerked out the "dear," as if it hurt him)—"the very natural grief which you have felt at the loss of so indulgent a father. Very natural and proper, I am sure, and becoming, of course. But you must bear in mind, you know, that you can't indulge it for ever. Life has its duties, we must remember, and its calls. Tell me now, what your plans are for the future, if you have formed any. You must see that you can't go on moping at Praona at my expense—at the expense of the kingdom, I should say."

This was a view of the case which had not previously occurred to the prince, who never, in all his life, had had, or had occasion to have, a thought on the subject of expense at all. He was so staggered by it now, that it took him some little time to reply.

"At your expense, uncle? Am I living at *your* expense, then? Have my own revenues disappeared? I surely misunderstand."

“Your own revenues! What are they, I should be glad to know? Why, my good sir, you must be perfectly aware that you haven’t got sixpence in the world beyond what I choose to give you. The kingdom is mine, since your old fool—ahem, ahem—since your father died intestate. And I am not going to support you in idleness; nor is it for your advantage in any way that you should indulge your hypochondriac fancies any longer. You have good natural abilities, nobody better, if they had only been properly directed; and I shall do what I can to make a man of you—put you to something that shall advantage the state as well as yourself, instead of letting you go on wasting your time with a parcel of fiddlers and people who grub after all manner of useless weeds and nasty slimy creatures in dirty ponds! Look here, the chief curator of the archives is dead. You shall have his post; the pay of it is not great, you know, but you shall have—yes—you shall keep your apartments in the palace; and as for your dinners and so on, why, one more won’t make much difference at table, and we can reckon about that hereafter. The archives are in a terrible state of confusion; you will have to go through about ten of the record chambers, and carefully arrange all the contents before you can set about anything else; but you can work at odd times after your regular duties are done. We shall hear no more of your *symptoms* when you are fairly set to work. Hm! how say you?”

The prince was stupefied. At length, however, he was able to say

“Uncle, I do not know whether to believe my ears; it seems too wildly impossible that you could seriously make me such a proposal. But, at all events, I would sooner die than accept it, as I have no doubt I very soon should if I did accept it. Setting every other consideration aside, sir, you seem to forget the state of my health. I am quite unfit for any continued mental exertion; and on such a hatefully uncongenial occupation as that. Oh! I would sooner starve.”

“So you *shall* starve, sir,” cried out the king, whose long pent-up rage and hatred now found vent. “So you *shall* starve, or beg every morsel of bread you may need to keep body and soul together. Fanciful, miserable, puling, useless idiot that you are! You shall beg, and you shall starve, and you shall pack from hence. And when you don’t know where to turn for a crust, you may perhaps long to come back and cry *peccavi*, but it will be in vain. Never, to my dying day, will I look upon your milksop face more. You shall be driven out of the

Palace gates, and you shall be hunted out of the kingdom. Fool, idiot, scoundrel; I—I—I—I—don't know, I'm sure, what's to become of you."

The prince controlled his emotion, and answered quietly, and with dignity :

"It is well, sir; you need say no more. You will not need to drive me from the palace gates. You will not need to hunt me from the kingdom. I will darken your doors no more, since it is thus. It matters little to one so wretched where and under what circumstances he drags out the rest of his days, few as they seem likely to be. You say I shall starve, and I care little. There is One above, whose power is more potent than that of any earthly king, and I, like you, am in His hands. I—I—I—little thought once," said the poor prince, nearly breaking down as he glanced round the audience chamber, where he had so often been with his dear father, and where nearly everything was just as he had left it, "to have heard such words in this chamber. And—and—but enough. Before to-morrow evening I shall have left Sleona for ever, no doubt." And he moved to the door.

"And pray, where does my fine, smooth-spoken gentleman propose to go; and what may he propose doing for his livelihood?" said the king, in a voice elaborately soft and measured, laying merely a spiteful emphasis on the word livelihood.

But the prince passed out without another word.

The king clamped about the room. "Hm!" said he, when he was a little calm. "I wish I had not lost my temper. Can't be helped though, now. After all, you know, he is my nephew, and was very near being king. He is young, you see, and really the lad isn't well. Not that there's much the matter; but I shouldn't have spoken to him as I did, and in his father's old favourite room too. Well, well, we'll find something else for him to do, something he may take to better. There'll be a terrible kick-up in the kingdom when this is heard of; just when, I think, perhaps the people were beginning to get over their dislike to me too. But it'll be all right. I'll talk to him again to-morrow, or in a day or two. After all he's my own blood—my own blood. Well, well; let's think of something else."

And when next day came, he sent for the prince, but the prince had gone. Within an hour after the scene with his uncle he had ridden slowly out of the gate on the Praona road, the bloodhound after him.

"The world is wide," he thought, as he rode along; "there is room enough in it for me and for him; and here I cannot stay. I will go to Tama, and while I have my lute I need never want. I can play and sing better than many professional musicians, and Tama is the land of music. No one knows me there. The life will be quite to my taste. Have I not often thought that, had I not been a prince, I would have been a music artist? My mind is quite made up, and I shall lose no time. Uncle, perhaps, after all, your hardness to me is but a blessing in disguise; without it I never should have made for myself that name in the kingdom of art which I now feel I am destined to make. That is clearly my true calling; and by devoting myself to it, I am sure of happiness."

Upon this resolution he acted at once energetically, as he always did when any new and pleasant fancy occurred to him. And, really, the more he thought of it the more clear did it appear to him that this was not merely the sole course open to him in the circumstances, but in reality a capital idea, and, upon the whole, a most fortunate thing. And as there was a Tama ship in harbour at Praona, he embarked in it late on the evening of his arrival, dressed like an ordinary gentleman, taking nothing with him but a few changes of dress of a similar description, his lute, his music manuscripts, all the money he had (which was not much), and the bloodhound, which refused to let him out of its sight. The Tama captain and crew had never seen him, and could have no idea who he was, and no one at Praona knew that he embarked. He turned into his cabin as soon as he had got on board, and soon slept soundly.

The bustle and noise on board as they were getting the ship under way awoke him at daylight, and he came speedily on deck. It was a lovely dawn, and the vessel was tacking across and across the bay, beating out of it against a light but freshening breeze, which would be a fair wind for them as soon as they had cleared the headlands. Each tack brought them further from the land, and, at length, just as they cleared the harbour mouth, and, squaring their yards, stood away on their course, the sun rose and lighted the hill-tops above Praona; and the light, rapidly descending, touched the gilded roof of the summer residence where so many happy times of old had been spent, gleamed brightly from its windows, and in due time illumined the pretty town lying by the water at the base of the hills, with villas and gardens

climbing up the slope. Presently the rocks shut up this scene, as the ship speeded on her course, and the old life was done. All day the prince stood watching the island, as it grew fainter and fainter to the view, till after sunset, when it was nothing but a dim line on the horizon, with the tall snow-peak standing up, its base hidden in mist, so that it seemed suspended in air above the island. Then mists rose up and hid that also. Then the prince sighed, and watched the stars and constellations as they shone out and brightened as the night came down. And then he thought about the future.

Now, it has taken some time to tell you all this, but as, when I began the story, I told you that Prince Loroio was reigning over Sleona, of course you understand that he must have come back to it one day. I have now got to endeavour to tell you how he fared in Tama, how he came back to his kingdom again, and, above all, what was the thing that he had done which he ought not to have done, which was the particular cause of the misery he endured when he came to man's estate, and should have been so happy. I will try to do so in as few words as may be, and I think and hope that you will find the account of all this much more interesting than what has gone before, though I was obliged to go into the latter or you would not have quite understood the story.

A. E.

[To be continued.]

NIGHTS AT THE ROUND TABLE.

THE LITTLE SICK CHILD.

IF there was one thing in the world which always made the Nights at the Round Table pleasanter than usual, it was a visit from Cousin Hester. The children loved Cousin Hester; they did more, they rejoiced in her. They admired her as only children can admire, and when she sat down at the table, it was as if an additional lamp had been put upon it; all faces gathered brightness. Yet Cousin Hester only half belonged to them, having reached that midway, partially grown-up state, which is called *the awkward age* by mammas and

critical observers. She was apt to come into the room rather abruptly, for instance, and never seemed quite comfortable till she had sat down somewhere rather out of the way. Then her arms were red, and her hands would often become the same, and they had a tendency to feel too long, or too big, or too something; an inconvenience she was quite sensible of, and only got over by resolutely shutting them up together, and placing them quietly on her lap. For some time past, too, she had heard rather fidgetty debates going on at home as to whether her frocks, which some friends now began to call "dresses," ought not to be lengthened at least ten inches, and so raise her to the position of a young lady; or whether it was not a pity, as mamma contended, to make a girl old before her time, besides the inconvenience of a complete new set of everything, &c., &c. It was not particularly pleasant to hear two people discussing her in this way for perhaps half an hour together, just as if she was a chair or a sofa, and the question was whether the chintz should cover the legs or not. But Hester was happy-tempered by nature, and being more forward in intellect than in fashion, she could, as soon as the momentary annoyance was over, laugh to herself, or with her eldest brother, over her position as a family chair under upholstering consideration. He, indeed, whose progress had been rather the reverse of hers, as is constantly the case with boys, was rather vexed with her for treating so lightly what he considered so serious a subject; but his expostulations were all to no purpose. Hester had her laugh out to the end, and waited as patiently as ever for the result of the grand deliberation.

Now, by virtue of her half grown-up condition, Cousin Hester was always expected to sit and talk to her uncle and aunt for a little bit after dinner, before she joined the children at the round table; just to tell them the last news from home, and give sensible answers to sensible questions, just as grown-up people do. And this she accomplished with so little sign of impatience or distaste, sitting on a chair between the two, looked at by both through their spectacles, the red hands folded together and laid as tidily as might be in her lap, that sometimes her aunt had an apprehension in another direction, and would say at last, in all sincerity:

"Hester, my love, do you *really* like going to the children? Because, don't think yourself in the least bound to do it, if you had rather not. They can amuse themselves very well."

While, on the other hand, the children (Harry in particular) had the strongest possible conviction that Hester only talked "grown-up stuff," as he called it, as a matter of ceremony, and was longing to come to them the whole time.

But if they ever ventured to hint this, which occasionally they did, Hester always baffled their sauciness by a joke.

"You flatter yourself, Mr. Henry!" she would say on such occasions, and chuck him under the chin with a smile. Whereat Harry would feel as foolish as possible, for he never could make up his mind whether to be angry or pleased; angry at his being treated like a baby, or pleased at the kindly touch of the dear familiar hand.

As to Cousin Hester's own feelings, a sudden jump up and pushing back of her chair with a cheerful "Oh, no, aunt, I like them," was always her reply to her aunt's misgivings, while the hearty delight she brought to the round table was the best proof that she spoke truth, and that the child-like half of her was happily still in full force. In fact, the "awkward age"—and I say this in the face of all critical grown-up people whatsoever—gains in interest from its honest-hearted modesty, simplicity, and unselfishness, a thousand-fold more than it loses from the want of fashionable elegance and ease. At the very root of its awkwardness lie those safeguards of the young—an absence of impertinent self-confidence, a consciousness of how much remains to be done and learnt, and a sense of the superiority of others. And all this coupled with an unfolding of mental power, as well as affection, which lifts the aspirations as high for the future as it keeps conceit down low for the present.

Parents and guardians, you know not what you are about when you are ashamed of "the awkward age" in your children! That age, when as yet for a brief space, the young spirit is unhackneyed in the conventionalities of the world. The children who jump into finished women in their teens, may spare your blushes over trifles of manners, but are more likely to give you the heartache in serious matters all the sooner.

But this is preaching, and I do not want to preach. If I have established Cousin Hester in your good graces, it is enough.

And now fancy Cousin Hester coming one evening on a visit, and *not* joining the little ones at the round table as soon as the routine conversation with uncle and aunt was over, and the last family news



retailed. Fancy the weary half hour of wonder, as they sat watching her in the distance, getting more and more eager, as it seemed, in grown-up talk. This was long after mamma's headaches and papa's gout, and the last letter from the sailor brother had been discussed. What could they be talking about? Little Lucy crept away at last to listen, for all Harry's drawer-rattlings and foot-stampings had failed to attract attention. But when she came back, and had scrambled into her chair, she could give no comfort to the others.

"It's all about sick people and doctors, and she'll never have done." And Lucy, whose bedtime came first, looked very much disposed to cry.

But the charm had been broken by her movement; and she had scarcely finished speaking before Cousin Hester was among them, "at last," as Harry ejaculated, with a sigh of relief, and Hester echoed as she sat down.

And then, unreasonably enough, they asked her at once to tell them a story.

"I haven't a single 'once upon a time' in my head," expostulated Hester.

"I'm glad," said Barbara; "I'm rather tired of 'once upon times.'"

"Are you? That's good!" cried her cousin. "Then for once upon a time you shall have what actually is."

"I don't mind, if it's only entertaining," said Harry.

"Entertaining!" exclaimed Hester. "That's just the way with you children! So long as you're amused yourselves, the world may go to pieces, and you won't care."

"Oh, yes, we do care very much!" cried the children. "Cousin Hester, we really do!"

"We're very sorry," whispered Ada to Lucy, "aren't we?" and Lucy nodded her head in assent.

"Then will you care for a poor little sick boy I want to tell you about?" asked Hester. "He has been ill six years—longer than you've been alive, Lucy—and while we are all here talking so comfortably, he is lying flat on his back in bed, unable to get up at all."

"What is he doing?" was Ada's question at once.

"That I can't tell you, exactly," answered Hester. "He may be going to sleep now, perhaps, as it's bedtime; but if it were daylight, he might be trying to knit a garter, or do a few stitches of worsted work."



THE LITTLE SICK CHILD AT HIS WORSTED-WORK.

"In bed?" was the next inquiry.

"In bed," answered Hester, "and lying on his back. It is a year or more since he could even sit up with pillows behind him."

"It's very shocking," observed Harry, who hearing of an illness of six years, had been rather anxiously wondering how old the child was, and now found on inquiry that the poor little fellow and himself must have been born the same year, for it was when he was three years and a few months old that the weakness, or rather disease, in his thigh came on, the result of which was that he was a bedridden cripple.

It was a sad but not very uncommon story. The parents were artizans in the large ugly straggling stocking-weaving village where Hester lived. Their wages varied with varying trade, and also, even when trade was good, by the number of days the man chose to work. In times of bad trade, no doubt, he was forced to what they call in the north "play" several days in a week against his will; but, unluckily, in times of good trade he was very apt to "play" because he liked it, and when play was literally playing at those old sports the northmen of England still delight in, and not the forced idleness from having nothing to do which is still called "playing" in that part of the country. So the stocking-weaver's family was often not much better off than a farm-labourer's in those counties of England where nine or ten shillings a week is all a man can earn, let him be as industrious as he will. For the sports, though innocent in themselves, led to gambling, unfortunately, and the gambling to poverty; and the end of all this was, that the poor sick child was not lying in a pretty cottage, with nice pictures on the walls, and flowers in flower-pots inside the muslin window-curtain; and with a tidily dressed mother or sister working or talking by his side to amuse him; but on a scantily-furnished bed-stock in a low empty room with sloping roof, in one of those old-fashioned tumble-down cottages which still linger in the north, and are so picturesque to look at, but so comfortless inside. The flagged floor, broken, uneven, and dirty, the wood-work rotten, the walls blotched with damp, the place owning no landlord who cared for it or its inhabitants. So long as it just held together and they just paid their rent, it was enough.

But the child! How little the child knows of all this. If he suffered by it, it was quite unconsciously. His room—for it might well be called his when he had lain there in patient suffering for years—was a whitewashed cell—the whitewash tinted with vitriol blue—that is, to

keep off vermin and dirt; and the bed-stock faced a small, deep-sunk window, so low in the wall, fortunately, that through its panes the sick child's eyes had one entertaining sight, that of the paved pathway along the south front of the church. Yes, those large dark eyes could, as the child lay flat on his pallet, look through those panes and see the folks walk up and down the pathway to go to church, or cross over the churchyard to the village. And Hester might have told her cousins, though she did not do so, that many a time when she knew nothing about it, his eyes were fixed upon her distant figure as she moved backwards and forwards—perhaps coming to him, but perhaps on some other errand; and he would shout to his mother down-stairs to tell her that *she* was there; not with any special craving about her visits to him, but because the sight of her was such an interest in his narrow-bound, lonely life. For *she* was a great fact to him. It was she who had taught him the knitting and the worsted-work and the letters of the alphabet; and before this was possible she had shown him pictures, and told him of God and the Saviour of the World, who went about making sick people well, and in whose name he must say his prayers.

Hester had nothing specially exciting to tell about the little fellow, nevertheless, for he was by no means a child concerning whom any high-wrought description could be got up. To strangers, even to Hester's mother, who was comparatively old, and of whom he had seen so much less, he was silent, almost surly in manner, constantly giving no answer to the simplest question, and never looking the speaker in the face. Even to Hester his answers were often very curt; and once, when a very little fellow, he had sent her away, bidding her "Go now, as he had had enough of her." But the honest, warm-hearted girl, liked the child all the better for his honesty, and encouraged it. For as she looked down upon the sick face and averted eyes she knew that the poor little frame could not move without pain, and that all the comforts the world had to offer were powerless to save him those pangs which kept brain and heart too feeble and sick for any continued enjoyment.

"Are you tired of me?" was, therefore, an habitual question with her, after the worsted-work or prayer or spelling lesson had gone on for a little time, and when he answered "Yes," she would get up and bid him good-bye, telling him he was a good boy, and she would come again.

Was there no remedy then?

Well, nearly six years before this time, Hester's mother had stepped into the cottage to ask after a young woman, who stood inside coughing violently; and by the door as she entered was a little chair, in which sat the young woman's eldest child, then three years old, tied in by a handkerchief, which was drawn round his waist and fastened behind. He had a bad hip, the mother said—a weakness had fallen into it. The doctor told them it would be a long time before it was well. So he was not to walk; so he sat in the chair, and other children came and played with him. The worst was they sometimes knocked the knee or foot of the bad leg in their play—how could they help it?—and then the poor three-year-old invalid would whine or cry till the fresh pain subsided, and then try to play again, though seldom without fear; and so it went on, for time brought no improvement. By-and-by followed a “recommendation to the infirmary” in the nearest town, but as an out-patient only, for young as the boy was he had one strong sentiment, he would not be “taken away,” he said. He never submitted to be carried to the infirmary without having made his mother promise to bring him back again. Whether it was right or wrong to yield to this fancy may be doubtful, but so also is the question whether the infirmary surgeons could have cured him even had they had him altogether under their care. As it was they certainly did not, and he lingered on till worse symptoms appeared, and the poor swollen, gathered hip had to be cut. And then of course came a great increase of weakness, and months during which he must have died but for the support of additional food. But he lived through even this, and had now settled down into the state Hester told of; sometimes better, sometimes worse, the wound never healing; the fever common in such cases sometimes present, flushing his cheeks with large red patches and hurrying his breathing; but sometimes altogether absent, leaving him cool and composed to make his little remarks to Hester if she called, or have a word with the younger brother and sister, who just occasionally would come in from more lively companions in the street to stamp up the rickety stairs to tell “their Leonard” some grievance or pleasure that had befallen them.

And still was there no remedy? The children at the round table asked it at once. “Cousin Hester, can't he be cured?”

But Hester stooped over the table and answered, “How can I say?”

Nor could she. Many and many a healthy child had been struck down and carried to its grave after a few days' illness during the six years Leonard had lain wasting of that terrible hip-sore, it was true. His hold on life was very tenacious therefore; still in that cottage, with no regular nurse, no continued medical attendance or management, no hourly watching and care, what hope could there be, unless it was God's will that unassisted nature should work almost a miracle in his favour?

But it was not Hester's object to dwell on all this. What she went on to tell her cousins was that there *was* a place where the sick children of parents like these—ignorant and unable to help themselves as they necessarily were—were taken care of and nursed and doctored, and cured if it was possible, and made happy by every kindness that could be thought of, whether they got better or not; and that was the Children's Hospital in London, which she had been talking about to her aunt when Lucy had crept to them on tiptoe to listen.*

"And you'll send the child there?" interrupted Harry. "That's capital! I know now, you want our new shillings to help. Well, here's mine, and welcome, and the others won't care a bit about theirs, I'm sure, and then we'll talk about something else." And Harry laid the new shilling Hester had brought him from her mother on the table, and twirled it round to where she sat.

But Hester twirled it back again with a laugh.

"I like you to be wrong, Harry," cried she, "and you are. I want neither shillings nor sixpences, and I do want to go on talking, so you must listen."

The friend who told them of the hospital had offered to send for the child, quite free of all expense, she assured them; and he could go and be taken care of and comforted, and amused, and nursed, and *perhaps* cured (but nobody could promise that)—all for nothing. But the poor boy's one instinct of clinging to home was in the way, and his parents wouldn't even ask him to do what he did not like, and they did not believe he could bear the journey, and they had no faith in the possibility of his being cured.

"And perhaps it is best as it is," concluded Hester; "at least I know it would make me miserable if the operation they talk about for saving his life failed. We can take care of him a little you know, just to ease some of the trouble, and—in short——" but here Hester

* Hospital for Sick Children, 49, Great Ormond Street, London.

broke down rather—"I don't want to talk any more about him; it's about the hospital."

"I won't hear about any more sick children," exclaimed Harry rather angrily, springing to his feet, but brushing off something like a tear from his cheeks.

"I want you to help, not hear!" cried Hester.

"I can't help, how can I?" asked Harry; "you won't have my shilling, cousin Hester."

"Now we've got to the right point," said Hester; "I want you, all of you, to join me in a plan, and those that love cousin Hester will hold up their hands and say yes."

There was a little hesitation in the two elder ones, for Harry did not see why his love for Hester should involve his saying yes to her plan, and Barbara said they ought to be told beforehand what the plan was, her tendencies being a little in favour of the "rights of man." Lucy's and Ada's hands went up at once. They loved Cousin Hester, and that was enough: but all hands went up at last.

"Now then," said Hester, looking brightly across the table, "what do you say to our making a collection of things to be sent up to London to help to amuse the poor little sick children in that hospital? Or, if anything we make turns out not good enough to be sent there, we can put it by for my poor little boy at home—if, that is, it will amuse him; but you know, poor little fellow, it is only a few things he *can* be amused with, as he can't even sit up."

"I wish I could think of something," exclaimed Harry.

"Well, let us begin by such things as will suit any child," continued Hester; "the hospital is a charity, you know, and is glad of toys, or books, or work, or picture-books, or anything; and there are heaps of things we can do; oh, heaps, I know there are," cried poor Hester, whose whole heart had become so involved in the subject of late, owing to the bitter disappointment of not being able to get Leonard into the hospital, that she became quite excited whenever she talked the subject over.

"Let me see," said she, "any sort of needlework is welcome; from clothes for the children themselves, up to dolls' frocks. Even pin-cushions, samplers, needle-cases—and you know how you like a new one yourself Ada; little mats, too, muffedtees, comforters, garters, bead necklaces—Oh, it's endless! And scrap-books made of holland, that

the leaves may not tear, with the pictures pasted on them ; and then drawings, and drawings of flowers. Oh, and then books of dried flowers too—those that keep their colour best at any rate—to remind the poor little things of what they will see out of doors when they get better ; or of what they used to see before they were ill ; and then little boxes of those shells you got bags full at the sea-side last year, and boxes of seals perhaps, and hundreds of other little things we shall think of by degrees.”

“Then about toys, too,” Hester went on, “besides those you can make yourselves—and even you Harry, can make capital jumping frogs from the breastbones of geese, and a bit of cobbler’s wax, if you choose to try ; think of the number of pretty ones you children get so tired of, there is no more fun to be had out of them, but breaking or tearing them to pieces ! Those are the things I want you to save and put by and trim up and mend for the poor little sick children who need so many fresh things to amuse them, because they are so much confined.”

“Think of how many *you* want,” she continued, “who can run out of doors, and look about you, first in one room then in another, and kick and plunge as you please. And then think of how you would feel and what you would want, if you were shut up in one room—perhaps in bed—perhaps with pain worrying you all along for weeks and months.”

Of course such little children as they were, Hester admitted, could only do a little. But the mouse helped the lion once, as they had read in *Æsop*, and it was a grand thing to be able to help at all.

Thus speaking, Cousin Hester, with her earnest face and eyes glistening in the lamplight, sat among the little ones, like a good angel, inspiring them with a desire for charitable exertion, and not in vain. True, it is easier to awaken such desires in the warm-hearted young, than to guide them into wise and steady efforts. But, in her small way, Hester was very successful. They went to sleep that night to dream of what they would do, but when the free time came next day, they were glad to be encouraged to do it in reality. Oh the blessing of an object in life ! Harry walked miles to bespeak the saving of breastbones of geese ; besides collecting knuckle-bones which he cleaned milk-white himself, after setting Ada to hem pink cotton bags to hold the different sets. Lucy meantime, helped now and then

by nurse, sorted shells out of the great mixed bag-full they had thrown aside in the play closet, because they didn't know what to do with them. Now at last their use was found, and in separate little boxes found by mamma, the various kinds looked quite pretty. As to the tiny ribbed cowries, some spotted, some plain, as Ada turned them over and over and over, she began thinking how pleased she should have been had she been a sick child in bed, to have had them to look at and play with—so curiously made, so fantastic, one might make almost stories about them.

Joint enterprises too went on. Barbara and Harry took the labours of the holland scrap-book on themselves. She to overcast and stitch the leaves ; he to cut out pictures and make the paste. And so on, for children's devices outrun description. . But one thing was perfectly clear. Evening after evening went over in hospital work, and no one was tired, and by the end of the first week, wonders were accomplished. Harry's frogs, for instance, were a triumph of skill, and set the whole party in an uproar of delight, when he started them together in a line on the grass, for what he was pleased to call a jumping race, in order to exhibit their powers.

"But oh, Cousin Hester, the poor children in bed !" cried Harry at the end in a fit of sudden dismay, "they won't be able to do anything with them ; I'm afraid the frogs wouldn't jump upon bed clothes."

"You forget the large nursery playroom we read about last night," answered Hester, and so he had. Just for the moment, and thinking in reality more of poor Leonard than any other child, he had forgotten that at the hospital there were rooms for invalids of all sorts ; grand large nurseries for those recovering fairly, where some children could play on the floor, some sit at tables, and others look on from little sick pallets where they had to lie, but could still enjoy whatever was going on around them ; could laugh at the frog-races therefore, when frog-races were established. While for those other quieter places, where two or three weaker invalids had a nurse to themselves, what a comfort would be the shells and little bead trinkets and tiny dolls, and other such light, easily-handled matters.

Indeed this was the delight of all the labour, that nobody's work was too poor or too small to be of use. Aye ! it was cheering even to the baby hemmer of a pink cotton bag for knuckle-bones, to dream while she stitched, of the pleasure the child would feel to whom it was given.

Behold, too, the old round table turned to more actual use than ever ! Hester had said it would be so, and her words came true. In the first place, baby's drawer was called "the Hospital ward" at once, and in it was deposited each little article when completed ; even the shell-boxes, knuckle-bone bags and frogs. Harry had settled this from the first, declaring jocosely that it would bring the Baby good luck, to give up his drawer to such good purpose.

Consequently he announced it as Hospital ward for the four quarters of the world, and appointed himself guardian packer on the spot. Besides which, work of so many different kinds being on hand, Hester had an excuse for suggesting a little order generally, and the other three quarters of the Round Table World turned themselves respectfully out at her command. Europe's thimble, scissors and needle case, with certain dolls' clothes, &c., thereon depending, accordingly replaced the confused odds and ends which had hitherto stuffed her up almost beyond shutting ; while to Barbara's glowing delight, America, when cleared her full length, proved big enough for the holland scrap-book and certain water-colour drawings besides, at which she was now at work day by day, with all the ardour at any rate, of an artist. Then for possible larger articles, mamma promised room on a shelf in the closet below the bookshelves, where a contribution or two from herself were to have a place, not pretty and entertaining like theirs she admitted, but necessary, as all over the world plain common things were apt to be !

How much even the first week had accomplished ! What a change from the day when Harry had declared he would hear no more stories about sick children ! They had heard numbers now, and even cried over Dickens' "little Johnny," who was taken to the hospital, alas ! "too late" for this life ; but not too late to see the picture of "*another Johnny seated on the knee of some angel, surely who loved little children*"* which hung over his bed. Nor too late to be soothed and comforted in those last painful hours preceding death.

At the end of another week, Cousin Hester was packed up and ready for travelling. She was going home, but she was to take the parcel of parcels to the London hospital first. She had a friend who would introduce her, and she longed to see that tenderly nursed common family of Christ with her own eyes, and get hints for the

* "Our Mutual Friend," Chapter IX.

poor lonely child at home. As to the packing of that parcel, I will not offer to describe the excitement of it ; nor the unutterable delight of the little ones in seeing their handiwork, and their spared toys and books, actually, really, going to be of use. Barbara slipped away into the shrubbery, after Hester had driven off, to cry it all out comfortably to herself, and Lucy and Ada talked in whispers of what sort of children they thought would get hold of their toys, and what each would say to each about them. As to Harry, though so soon going to school, and at work daily for some hours in preparation, he took a whistling stroll round the premises before he sat down to business, and made up his mind that carpentering a few boats would be his next leisure amusement ; he thought he could even make some little ones of cork, which might do to float in the children's tin baths, if the nurses at the hospital would allow of it.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT BULBOUS PLANTS.

ONE day in January, Annie Cameron and Lucy Wenham, two little Indian girls living with Miss Gordon, were sent with a message to Mrs. Lacy, the clergyman's wife in the same village, and they came back from the parsonage in a state of great excitement at the beautiful little garden they had seen in Mrs. Lacy's window.

"Actually, Miss Gordon," declared Lucy, "there were hyacinths, tulips, crocuses, snowdrops, and a little blue flower, which Mrs. Lacy called a scilla, growing in a large pudding basin ; you never saw anything so pretty."

Even the grave Annie was eager to describe the beauty and the sweetness of this original garden, and to ask if they might attempt something of the kind in the schoolroom.

"But," said Miss Gordon's little niece Mary, "what were the plants growing in ? There was some mould, I suppose, in the basin for the roots to take hold of."

"No," said Annie ; "there was no mould, but sand at the bottom of the basin. The roots were not covered at all."

"The roots ? You mean the bulbs, Annie," said Miss Gordon.

"The roots are underneath them—fibres, like other roots. The bulbs were formed in the summer of last year, and consist of layers, coat within coat, covering up and nursing the young plant folded up in them. This bulb holds a store of nourishment, drawn from the ground and laid up within it; and this is the reason that bulbous plants will grow in sand or moss, or anything that will hold moisture, or even in water alone."

"Oh, Miss Gordon!" said Lucy; "might we try to make a garden like Mrs. Lacy's?"

"I am afraid it is too late in the year for crocuses and snowdrops," said Miss Gordon; "but you might try some hyacinths, if we can get any from the nurseryman at Newton. We will call at the carrier's, and ask him to bring us half-a-dozen this evening, for there is no time to be lost in putting them in sand or water, whichever you wish; for they must be in the dark for a month."

"In the dark?"

"Yes, the roots will only grow in the dark; or, rather, the leaves would grow in the light, and that would take all the strength of the plant, which ought first to put out strong roots."

"But when the bulbs are planted in the garden," said Annie, "how are they darkened?"

"They are planted in the mould, and covered entirely, three or four inches deep," said Miss Gordon; "so that the bulb is in darkness, and the roots strike into the ground, before the leaves sprout."

The carrier was successful, and brought back some white, pink, and blue hyacinths, two of each, which were duly planted in a wide pudding basin half filled with damp sand. Miss Gordon made the girls press down the bulbs firmly, but not too hard, after she had moistened the sand, and then poured more dry sand round them, till they were rather more than half covered. Then she told them that they would want no more water for the next three or four weeks, during which time they should be put in a large cupboard in the store-room, where they could have air without light. Jane and Bessie sighed much over the thought of waiting for three or four weeks without seeing their garden, and Miss Gordon promised that they should look at it in a fortnight. When the time was up, therefore, they went in a body to the store-room, the basin was taken out of the cupboard, and exhibited to the eager girls.

"Oh!" exclaimed Lucy; "look, Miss Gordon, there are two standing up quite above the sand, somebody must have been meddling with them."

"Yes, somebody must have pulled them out of the sand," cried Mary; "who can have done it?"

Miss Gordon laughed, and made them see that the roots had grown so strongly, that they had quite raised the bulbs up; and she poured a little water round them, and hollowed out the sand, so as to take out the bulbs without breaking any of the roots. Then she made fresh holes in the sand for them, and replanted them, and then put them back in the cupboard, first removing a little blue mould or mildew, that was just appearing on one of the bulbs, and which she told them was caused by the damp.

"Will it do any harm?" asked Annie.

"Not if wiped off at once," Miss Gordon answered. "It would spread all over the bulb, and cause it to decay, if allowed to remain."

The girls were exceedingly eager for the next fortnight to be over, when they might take possession of their garden; and it was taken out of the cupboard, well watered, and placed in the schoolroom window on the 18th of February. Charmed to find the white stalks just beginning to sprout, and much astonished to find them getting green in a few days, they questioned Miss Gordon a great deal about this, and asked how soon they might look for the flowers. She told them that all plants derived their colour from the light, and that any plant growing in a cellar or dark underground place would be quite white.

Annie asked if she were right in thinking that there was a difference in the bulbs in Mrs. Lacy's miniature garden. "The hyacinths," she said, "looked as if they were made up of round folds, while the tulips seemed to have leaves folding one over the other round the bulb, and the crocus bulbs looked flat and solid."

Miss Gordon said she was quite right about this, and that the bulb is really a kind of bud, with the outer leaves thickened and fleshy, so as to hold a great deal of moisture, forming the food of the young plant. In the hyacinth, as in the onion, the scales are very thick and fleshy, and surround the whole; these are called by botanists tunicated bulbs; while the tulip and lily have smaller and looser scales, overlapping one another. She promised to show them the bulb of a white

garden lily, in which this difference in the scales was still more evident. "The crocus," she said, "had a more solid bulb, which was called a corm."

"Two of our hyacinths have tiny bulbs coming out at the side of the large bulb," said Mary. "Are these of any use?"

"You had better take them off," said Miss Gordon, "because they weaken the parent bulb by taking some of the nourishment from it which it requires for its leaves and flowers."

"If we were to leave them, would they grow into other plants?" asked Lucy.

"Yes, but it would require a long time to bring them to perfection. They would have to be taken off when ripe, and carefully grown and nourished; and it would be some years, three or four I think, before they would produce good flowers. The Dutch are the chief growers of bulbs; the soil and climate of Holland seem to be peculiarly well suited to them. I believe they use a good deal of sand at Haerlem in their cultivation, and they send them over to England when they are just coming to perfection."

Annie asked whether hyacinths were natives of Holland.

"No," said Miss Gordon, "they came originally from the Levant, and grow abundantly about Aleppo and Bagdad. They were first cultivated by the Dutch at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and introduced into England about the end of that century."

Mary asked if the wild blue hyacinth that grew in the woods was the same plant, and was told that it was of a different species.

Annie said she should like to grow some tulips in the same way as hyacinths.

"So should I," said Lucy; "those in Mrs. Lacy's little garden were quite beautiful."

"Well, next year perhaps we may set up a more perfect garden," observed Miss Gordon; "but we must get the bulbs earlier in the autumn."

"Do the Dutch grow tulips too?" asked Jane.

"Yes, they are quite as famous for them as for their hyacinths; indeed, some hundred years ago, the people of Holland had such a rage for tulips that they spent quite a fortune upon one bulb. They imported them with the hyacinths from the Levant. They grow wild in the various parts of Europe and Asia Minor, and there is a little insig-

nificant looking yellow tulip, which grows in some places in England in chalk pits or quarries."

"Crocuses and snowdrops are English flowers, I suppose," said Lucy, "they are so common?"

"Not at all," said Miss Gordon, "they are very easily grown, and therefore very cheap, and you see them in many cottage gardens. Where they have been once planted they will go on from year to year. The old corm dies, but a quantity of small bulbs form upon it, so that they come nearer to the surface of the ground every year, and in time would grow quite out of it, if not taken up and planted more deeply. There are several species, most of which came from the south of Europe. The bright yellow crocus is a native of Syria and Greece; the purple and white, the little striped Scotch crocus, and the cloth of gold, all come from the neighbourhood of the Mediterranean. A writer upon plants in the reign of Queen Elizabeth says of the crocus, 'That pleasant plant that bringeth forth yellow flowers was sent unto me from Robinus of Paris.' One species of crocus, however, the *Crocus sativus*, saffron crocus, was known long before in England, and is said to have been cultivated for the saffron ever since the reign of Edward III., when it was brought to Saffron Walden by a pilgrim from the Holy Land."

"The snowdrops at least are wild flowers," said Mary, "and I like them all the better for being English flowers."

She said this rather indignantly, and Miss Gordon found that Lucy had been speaking rather slightly of snowdrops as "common things," which had called forth this burst of feeling from Mary.

"There is some doubt about their being natives of England, I am sorry to say," said Miss Gordon, "although it is quite true that they grow wild in some parts of the country, and very proud the people of these counties ought to be of them."

"I am so glad you have said that, Miss Gordon," exclaimed Mary, "there is nothing like snowdrops, they are more beautiful than many of the smart garden flowers that Lucy is so fond of; stuck up things!"

Miss Gordon smiled, but she confessed that very few garden flowers had half such a hold upon her affections as the snowdrop, the "fair maid of February," which every one delights to see pushing out its bright green leaves, and opening its snowy bells. She told them that when she was at Malvern, she made an expedition to the "snowdrop

valley," near Little Malvern Priory, where the snowdrops were growing in hundreds, in a little meadow by the side of a wood, and said it was thought likely that these had sprung from bulbs, once grown in the Priory garden, it being supposed that the monks had introduced them to England from Italy.

"I suppose the Dutch do not value them as they do the more gorgeous tulips and hyacinths, for in a Dutch work on bulbous flowers, published in 1614, the snowdrop is mentioned as very seldom found, excepting in the gardens of the curious. None of the early English poets mention it amongst their wild flowers." Mary observed that this must surely show that it was not growing wild in their time, as it was such a very poetical flower, and had so many beautiful names, that they could hardly have passed it over without notice, if they had been familiar with it.

Annie asked about its names, and she mentioned several, "the morning star of flowers," "fair maid of February," "purification flower," &c., &c.; and Miss Gordon said its botanical name, *galanthus nivalis*, was derived from *milk* and *snow*. Annie asked if the other spring flowers, daffodils and jonquils, were also bulbs?

"They are," said Miss Gordon, "and belong to the Amaryllis tribe of flowers, to which the snowdrops belong. The single yellow daffodil is very common in the south and midland counties of England, but rare in Scotland and Ireland; it grows in most parts of Europe too, between the Mediterranean and the Baltic, and is everywhere welcomed as the harbinger of spring. Poets mention the daffodil very lovingly, and Shakespeare says it ushers in 'the sweet of the year.'"

Mary said she had seen in some old book that the name was a corruption of Asphodel, but Miss Gordon said she believed it was derived from an old English word *affodyle*, which meant, "that which cometh early."

Annie asked if there were not more than one sort of daffodil, and said she had seen some very pretty white ones, with yellow cups tipped with red, in her uncle's garden.

"The *narcissus poeticus*, I suppose," said Miss Gordon, "it grows wild in some parts of England. I saw another sort, the "Primrose Peerless," or the flowered narcissus, growing wild near Malvern, but I was not nearly so charmed with them as with the more common daffydowndillys, which I saw growing by thousands on the turf, making the

banks like sheets of gold. Most of the jonquils came from the south of Europe, but the beautiful *narcissus polyanthus*, which is so deliciously sweet in Mrs. Lacy's room, grows about Constantinople, and in other parts of the East."

"What are we to do with the hyacinths when they have done blooming?" asked Lucy; "will the bulbs do another year?"

"You had better leave them till the leaves turn yellow and die down, and then put the bulbs in a dry airy place till they get quite dry, and then you may put them away in a drawer till next autumn; but they will not produce such good flowers another year."

"How strange it is they should do all that time without water or soil," observed Mary. "I should have thought they would certainly die."

"All plants require a season of rest," said Miss Gordon, "but bulbs are so formed as to exist for many months without external nourishment, and it is this property which enables them to live in dry sandy deserts, and other situations where rain does not fall, excepting for a few weeks in the year. If they were left in the damp they would get rotten."

"Are they resting all the summer?" asked Annie.

"They are resting from putting out leaves and flowers," replied Miss Gordon, "as the summer flowers and trees rest in the winter, but all the time that they are apparently sleeping, the new leaves and flowers for the next season are being formed within them; and some species of the amaryllis tribe will flower much better if they are kept a long time without water, so as to prolong their season of infancy."

"Just as children are stronger when they do not grow too fast," observed Mary. "Yes, but they could not do without food," cried Lucy.

"No, indeed," said Miss Gordon; "but you see animals and plants are all formed exactly after the fashion best for the situation and circumstances in which they are placed. Every country has its peculiar plants which could grow nowhere else in such perfection. In places like the hard dry karroos of the Cape of Good Hope, where rain falls only during three months of the year; in the Barbary plain, where there are only showers in the winter; in the Syrian deserts, and on the hot shores of tropical India, buried in sand, often 180 degrees hot, bulbous plants live, and delight the eye with their beauty. In the deserts of Syria, a traveller speaks of the bright colours of various species of iris, asphodel, crocuses, tulips, &c. As you approach the borders of Palestine, lilies and hyacinths grow in great abundance,

sometimes in immense beds, covering miles of sand, with scarcely any grass between."

Mary said she had read in some travels in the Holy Land, that all these were so beautiful there, especially the lily and amaryllis tribes, and she asked whether the white garden lily was not the "lily of the field," spoken of in Holy Scripture. Miss Gordon said she always thought so, because its native home was Palestine, but that some botanists had thought that it was the yellow amaryllis, which grew in the fields of Judæa in great abundance.

"However," she said, "this is not decided, and I do not know why the white lily should not be the plant spoken of."

"Dear me," cried Lucy, "I always thought it was the wild lily of the valley."

The other girls laughed, and Miss Gordon observed that Lucy was speaking without thinking; reminding her that the garden plants of one country were the wild plants of the field, and often the very wayside weeds, of another. She did not believe, she added, that the lily of the valley was a native of Syria, but certainly it was not a field plant, delighting rather in shady woods and retired situations; and beautiful and sweet as it was, it could not be called "arrayed in glory," like the splendid flowers of the lily and amaryllis.

Lucy said she supposed that the Japan lilies in Mrs. Lacy's garden came from Japan, at which Mary laughed, as she thought there could be no doubt about that; but Miss Gordon said the lily called the Guernsey lily was not a native of Guernsey, though it was so called. It came from Japan also, where so many beautiful lilies did grow; but a ship carrying some of the bulbs from Japan was wrecked on the shores of Guernsey, and the lilies buried in the sand, which chanced to be just the best soil for them, so they sprang up there, and have ever since been called by that name. Japan, she said, was famous for its gorgeous lilies and amaryllises; and she told them about the new golden lily which Mr. Fortune has lately brought to England, which he found growing on the hillsides in a wild district of Japan, and which glitters all over with red spots that catch the light, and has shining bars that make the white lily look as if it had rays of gold. It is said to be twice as large as the common white lily, and very sweet, and to be so hardy that it is expected to become in time as plentiful in our gardens as our old friend.

C. E. D.



HE MUST HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF PORRIDGE
WHO WOULD STOP EVERYBODY'S MOUTH.

AND then only for a time! Oh, you foolish old fellow with the spoon, helping the people all round, you are surely related to the Miller in Æsop's fable, who, going to market with his son and his ass, listened to all the tittle-tattle by the wayside; took everybody's opinion rather than his own; tried to please everybody rather than himself; and ended by pleasing nobody, not even himself!

See, now, how the folks gape! As fast as you fill one mouth another opens. The empty ones open to grumble at not being filled, and I wish the full ones may not open presently to find fault with your cooking!

But come, old greybeard, you must turn wise as Father Catz, who drew your picture, makes you do, and tell us your conclusions upon your past experience.

"I will go home and clean my hearth,
And heart and house, and keep them sweet;
Then, come who will from all the earth,
I'll set before him wholesome meat;

And offering this to friend or guest,
 Or any man of honest mind,
 I'll set all troubled thoughts at rest,
 And let those grumble who're inclined."

So be it; for the proverbs thicken around us.

"He is indeed a knowing wight,
 Who thinks to set the whole world right."

"He who builds by the roadside has a good many advisers."

"Never saw I, all my days,
 One who'd everybody's praise."

"He needs a clever counsel who is summoned before the world's tribunal."

FRISK.

A LITTLE boat in a cave,
 And a child there fast asleep;
 Floating out on a wave,
 Out to the perilous deep.
 Out to the living waters,
 That brightly dance and gleam,
 And dash their foam about him
 To wake him from his dream.

He rubs his pretty eyes,
 He shakes his curly head;
 And says, with a quaint surprise,
 "Why, I'm not asleep in bed!"
 The boat is rising and sinking
 Over the sailors' graves;
 And he laughs out, "Isn't it nice
 Playing see-saw with the waves?"

Alas! he little thinks
 Of the grief on the far-off sands;
 Where his mother trembles and
 shrinks,
 And his sister wrings her hands,

Watching in speechless terror,
 The boat and the flaxen head;
 Is there *no* hope of succour?
 Must they see him drown'd and dead?

They see him living now,
 Living and jumping about;
 He stands on the giddy prow,
 With a merry laugh and shout.
 Oh! spare him! spare him! spare
 him!

Spare him, thou cruel deep—
 The child is swept from the prow;
 And the wild waves dance and leap.

They run to the edge of the shore,
 They stretch their arms to him,
 Knee-deep they wade—and more—
 But, alas! they cannot swim!
 Their pretty, pretty darling—
 His little hat floats by—
 They see his frighten'd face,
 They hear his drowning cry.



HE BRINGS IT THEE, OH, MOTHER!
HIS BURTHEN PRETTY AND PALE.

Something warm and strong
 Dashes before them then,
 Hairy and curly and long,
 And brave as a dozen men.
 Bounding—panting—gasping—
 Rushing straight as a dart,
 Ready to die in the cause,
 A dog with a loyal heart.

He fights with the fighting sea,
 He grandly wins the prize;
 Mother! he brings it *thee*
 With triumph in his eyes.
 He brings it thee, oh, mother!
 His burthen pretty and pale—
 He lays it down at thy feet
 And wags his honest old tail.

Oh, dog! so faithful and bold,
 Oh, dog! so tender and true,
 You shall wear a collar of gold,
 And a crown (if you like it) too;

You shall lie on the softest satin,
 You shall feed from a diamond dish,
 You shall eat plum cake and cream,
 And do whatever you wish.

Will you drive in a coach and four?
 Will you ride on the master's hack?
 Shall the footman open the door,
 And out of your presence back?
 Shall the mistress work you slippers?
 Shall the master catch you flies?
 Will you wear the mistress's watch?
 And the master's best white ties?

Oh, Frisk! you shall do what you
 choose,
 Old friend, so gallant and dear,
 What churl would dare refuse
 To drink your health with a cheer?
 Old friend, with love and honour
 Your name shall be handed down,
 And children's hearts shall beat
 At the tale of your renown.

EDINEIN.

An appropriate "Notice to Correspondents," from the "Persian Moon-shee."

A person went to a scribe, and desired him to write a letter. He said: "I have a pain in my foot." The man replied: "I don't want to send you to any place, that you should make such an excuse." Says the scribe: "Your observation is just; but whenever I write a letter for any one, I am always sent for to read it, because no other person can make it out."

CHARADE.

Mon premier est le premier de son
 espèce;
 Mon second est sans second:
 Hélas! comment vous dirai-je mon
 tout?

ARABIAN PROVERB.

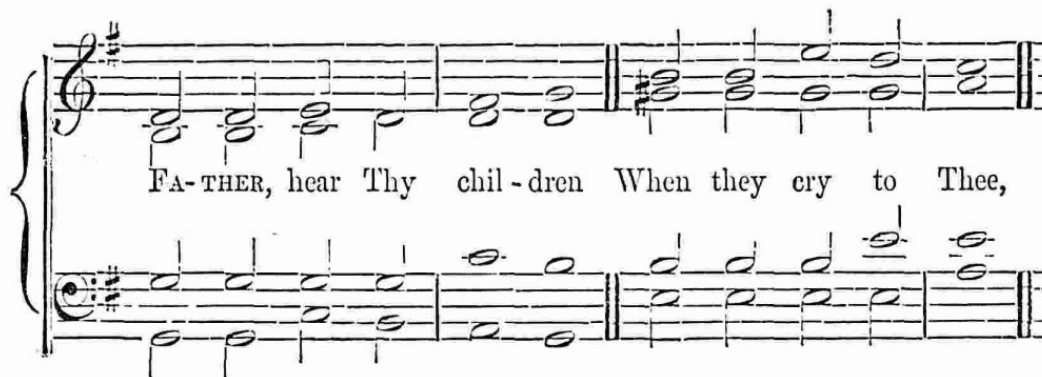
Be patient, and the mulberry-leaf
 will become satin.

Hymn.

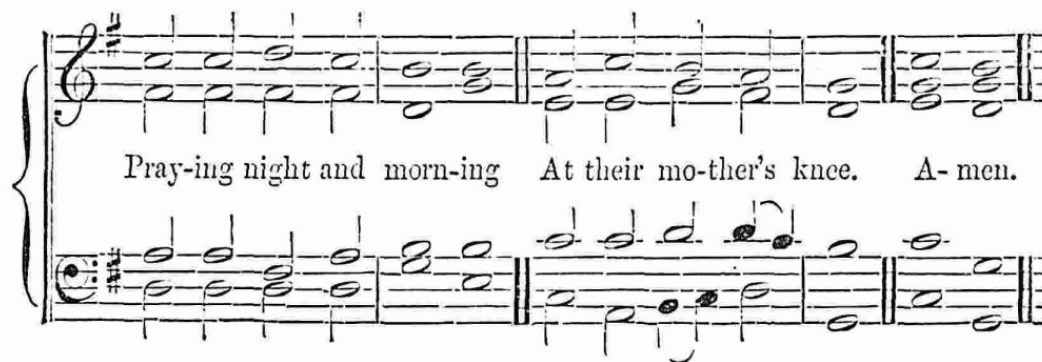
Music by ALFRED SCOTT GATTY.

FOR FOUR VOICES.

Words by A. G.



FA-THER, hear Thy chil-dren When they cry to Thee,



Pray-ing night and morn-ing At their mo-ther's knee. A-men.

Saviour, ever pleading
For the human race,
Plead for little children
At the throne of grace.

Holy Spirit, filling
Human hearts with love,
Guide the little children
To their home above.

Father, Son, and Spirit,
Ever watch and keep,
Like a careful Shepherd,
These Thy little sheep.
Amen.

REVIEWS.

What the Moon saw, and other Tales.
By Hans. C. Andersen. Illustrated.
(London : George Routledge & Sons.)

THIS volume is a sequel to a similar one published in 1864 ("Stories and Tales") by the same author, and will be welcomed with open arms by those who have learnt to love the first. It is true, however—at least so we believe, having been told so for a fact—that there are children who do not care much for the wild fancies that belong to fairy tales, but really enjoy books of realistic information much more. And it is well it is so, for there would be no freshness or variety in the world if all characters were built on one model, and everybody liked the same things. But as a large proportion of young readers are probably eager devourers of imaginative writing, we have only to name the name of Hans Christian Andersen, and say there are some new stories of his here, to ensure their springing up with delight at the idea. And they will not be disappointed. The translation reads quaintly and charmingly. Mr. Bayes' illustrations are excellent, occasionally quite weird and remarkable, and the stories themselves—a mixture of new and old, for translators select indifferently—are equal to any that have preceded them, only we must say they are here and there rather more touched with melancholy than we care to see. But perhaps this applies chiefly to the first few stories : and perhaps some of our young readers may find the additional touch of sadness an additional charm. Well, at any rate, this is a treasurable volume, and will, we hope, gladden the eyes and hearts of many of our young friends ; for the writings of Hans Christian Andersen, even in their wildest flights, appeal to the good feelings of their

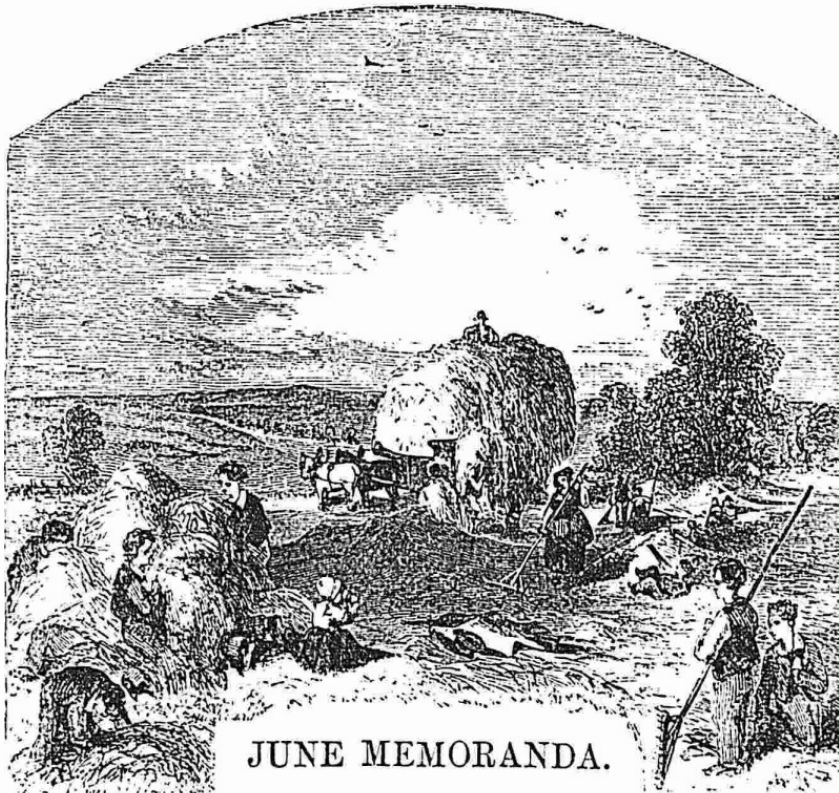
readers ; and parents are quite safe in including them in the libraries of the young.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. By Lewis Carroll : with Forty-two Illustrations by John Tenniel. (London : Macmillan & Co.)

Forty-two illustrations by Tenniel ! Why there needs nothing else to sell this book, one would think. But our young friends may rest assured that the exquisite illustrations only do justice to the exquisitely wild, fantastic, impossible, yet most natural history of "Alice in Wonderland." For the author Mr. Lewis Carroll, of course—you see his name on the title-page, do you not ? has a secret, and he has managed his secret so much better than any author who ever "tried on" a secret of the same sort before, that we would not for the world let it out. No ; the young folks for whom this charming account is written must go on and on and on till they find out the secret for themselves ; and then they will agree with us that never was the mystery made to feel so beautifully natural before.

Of Mr. Tenniel's illustrations we need only say that he has entered equally into the fun and graceful sentiment of his author, and that we are as much in love with little Alice's face in all its changes as we are amused by the elegant get up of the white rabbit in ball costume, the lobster quadrille on the sands, or the con-course of animals fresh from the "Pool of Tears" drying themselves in the mouse's most dry historical memories.

The above hints will probably make "parents and guardians" aware that they must not look to "Alice's Adventures" for knowledge in disguise.



JUNE MEMORANDA.

THAT Romulus honoured the "Juniores," or junior members of the legislature by giving this month the name of June, was alluded to in our May memoranda; and there is no better suggestion to offer. "Weyd-monat," or Meadow-month, was the Saxon name, "because," says Verstegan, "their beasts did then weyd" (pasture) "in the meddowes, that is to say, go to feed there." He says when he first speaks of the divisions of the year:—

"For the twelve monethes of the yeare they had such names as the nature of their seasons did aptest requyre; for the names which wee now call them by, wee have in aftertyme borrowed from the French and Latin, they having bin unto our ancestors wholly vnknewen."—A sentence we are tempted to give here as it occurs in Verstegan's book, that our young readers may notice the difference in the spelling of 1605 and 1866.

1215. June 19. In the meadow of Runnymede, on the banks of the Thames near Windsor, a very important event took place, of which Englishmen reap the benefit to this day.

The tyranny of John, at this time King of England, was felt by every class of his subjects, and at length became so intolerable that the nobles, headed by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and William, Earl of Pembroke, determined to try and obtain some redress for the wrongs under which the whole kingdom groaned. Under the Archbishop's advice a Charter was drawn up, limiting the power of the king over any class of his subjects within due bounds. So that, by the words of this guardian of our liberties, no freeman could be imprisoned, outlawed, exiled, or dispossessed of his property but by judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. Justice was to be administered evenly, without bribery or delay. It was also provided that taxes should not be collected without the consent of the great council of the kingdom—the Parliament as it is now called. The liberties of London and other large towns were secured, and the poorest labourers were not forgotten, for it was provided that they should not be deprived of the tools by which they got their bread.

To all these provisions for the security of the people against the illegal acts of a tyrannical monarch, John set his unwilling seal, knowing that the whole nobility and people of the kingdom were determined to enforce them if he had refused. This Charter, known by every Englishman as *Magna Charta*—the *great Charter*—has ever since remained as the foundation of our constitutional monarchy, and was ratified in succeeding reigns no fewer than thirty-eight times.

The blessings it brought to us are now so happily common that we notice them as little as the air we breathe; we can live at home and fear no prison or loss of property, we send members of our own choosing to Parliament, and without their consent no taxes are made, and if any one is accused of having broken the law of the land, he is sure of a fair trial without long delay, and in the presence of his friends and equals. But English children should not forget that all these blessings are the fruits of that meeting between King John and his Barons in the green meadow by the Thames six hundred years ago.

1783. June 5. The first public ascent of a "fire-balloon" took place on this day at Annonay, a town near Lyon in France. It was sent up by Joseph Montgolfier, its inventor and maker, from whom these balloons have still their French name, "*Montgolfières*."

Most children belonging to large families have seen a fire-balloon, or we hope will, at some time or other. Meanwhile, they shall hear how the treat used to come about in our day. The family friend in this case (and what family has not got an uncle or family friend of the sort?) was a curate in the old times, when curates had a few hours to spare for social intercourse. He never forgot a birthday in the vicar's family, and when the winter ones drew near, was sure to have business in the neighbouring town, whence he would bring away on such occasions a roll of coloured tissue-papers—red, blue, yellow, green, white—a bottle of spirits of wine, and a fine sponge. Now, some of you may wonder what these things were for, but the party at the vicarage knew, and the whisper went

round that the fire-balloon was going to be made. And some were admitted to watch the mysterious transaction. The cutting of the paper into broadly spindle-shaped slips, the confusion of pasting, the arrangement of colours, the printing of the birthday-child's name in large capitals, the management of the little opening below, with the wire framework for the sponge across—all the time the coloured fragments making the dingy room almost a fairy-land.

At last followed the completion of the fragile parti-coloured globe, and its transmission to the vicarage garden; and by-and-by, when the evening shades were dark enough, came the raising of it on some ingenious stand; the fastening of the sponge to the wire in the centre of the opening below; the soaking of the sponge from the spirits of wine bottle; the setting fire to this, and, finally, the rising of the now gorgeous globe—lit from within—into the still night-air.

Oh, to recall the happiness of that moment! the breathless anxiety of those who followed the lovely toy with eager eyes as it went up higher and higher, till turning aside down the valley, over meadows and trees, it vanished from sight in the distance, as a tiny spark that had gone out—a fitting type of the bright and short-lived joy it had caused.

Now, such being the delights of a fire-balloon ascent, may we not ask our young readers to take an interest in the man who invented them?

Not that they were thought of as toys in his day. No, Lalande, the astronomer, viewed the invention as a most important event in the scientific world. And so it was, as proving a principle. Still, looking back, as we do, from an age crowded with wonders, we are half ready to smile at Lalande's enthusiasm; but it is charming and interesting, nevertheless. He wrote as follows:—

"Never has physical science made so splendid a discovery: perhaps the mind of man never before conceived anything so extraordinary. Amongst celebrated names, that of Montgolfier will go down foremost: it will float upon the ages as he has taught us to float upon the winds."

This was a curious prophecy, and we will add our mite to its fulfilment.

Joseph Montgolfier was born at Darrezieux, near Annonay, in Languedoc, August 6, 1740. Annonay has always been celebrated for paper-making, and Joseph Mongolfier and his brother Stephen were great paper manufacturers there. Being at Avignon in December, 1740, Joseph was one day struck by the thought of the power of rarified air, and at once made an experiment on the subject. He sent out and purchased ten ells of Taffetas (a thin sort of silk), and cutting it up into spindle-shaped strips, caused these to be sown together, so that when expanded, they would form a ball. Then setting fire to a sheet of paper below (where the opening was left), he beheld, as Leland describes it

1784, when the King of Sweden (under the incognito of "Comte de Haga") visited Louis XVI. On that occasion, a large "Montgolfier," named "Marie Antoinette," was sent up in honour of the Royal visitor. It was richly ornamented, the intemingled cyphers of Louis XVI. and the King of Sweden being a prominent decoration. But the balloon, after being three-quarters of an hour in the air, took fire—an accident—which being discovered by the two daring aeronauts, MM. Pilâtre du Rosier and Prouts, they lowered the machine, and came down with all speed in a field near Chantilly. The Prince de Condé sent carriages to fetch them back, and named the meadow "Pilâtre du Rosier," to commemorate the event.

Greenwich pensioners used to call it. On that day Earl Howe, in command of our channel fleet, encountered, off Ushant, Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, with about an equal force of French ships, and obtained a complete victory, towing six of the enemy's line into Portsmouth, having dismasted ten and taken seven.

The joy felt on this occasion was no proof of national dislike. Nor can France, in her healthy moments, blame those who sought to restrain her in her hour of bloodthirsty madness; and such was the "year of terror," as the French themselves call it, from June 2, 1793, to July 28, 1794, when Robespierre met his end. Not that the "glorious first of June" even could do much to stay the blood.

prayer.) "Do you not hear it?" persisted Louis. "Listen! Listen!" and presently he exclaimed again, "Through all the voices I can distinguish my mother's!"

The French historian goes on to tell us that from that moment all his sufferings seemed relieved, and he was like one on whom a new existence was breaking. "Do you think my sister could have heard the music?" said the child, after a time; "How much good it would have done her!" The keeper then in attendance (Lasne) could not answer. Then the poor boy turned an eager glance to the window and then uttered an exclamation of joy. Then he said, looking at Lasne, "I have something

domains. You know the four cardinal points—let us see how you can get out of a difficulty. Here is my compass; you know exactly the position of the old castle. Take whichever road to it you think most convenient, I will take another, and we will meet again at old Rambouillet!" It was the first time the little Prince had been alone and without a guide, as he thought he was now; though, in reality, for fear of accidents, the King had appointed footmen, dressed as peasants, to follow and watch his movements.

The start of the little geographer was not an easy one, for the sun happened to be hid by very heavy clouds. Twenty times he strayed from the right path, but always got back to

as nearly as was possible by the aid of the compass. At last, after wandering about for four or five hours, he found himself in the direction of the rendezvous, now a quarter of a league off, towards the left, and soon after, forcing his way through hedges and vineyards, he reached the appointed spot, bathed in perspiration, but without having asked his way.

Such sweet domestic enjoyments were soon over for father and son, and there swept over France the darkest storm of horror and misery which has ever afflicted a nation.

1815. June 18. The Battle of Waterloo brought to an end the struggle of England with the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Without attempting any description of this memorable engagement, we are permitted to record (for the first time in print) an anecdote not so generally known as some others. The battle commenced at 11 a.m., and had lasted more than eight hours, when the contest seemed to slacken, and the aides-de-camp were coming up to the Duke from different parts of the field, bringing him their reports, to which his reply was, "Told off," as each success was announced. Lord Saltoun, however, observed that a large body of French infantry had been seen some time before to lodge themselves in the valley below, from which they had not emerged. The Duke at once disposed the Guards and some other regiments so as to meet this threatened attack, and he bent the line forward so as to outflank them, ordering

the men to lie down. Very soon the French columns were seen advancing, and it was at this crisis the Duke is said to have given his order, "Up, Guards, and at them!" The French could not deploy, owing to the cross fire, and it was their last effort.

Respecting the words, "Up, Guards, and at them!" a controversy was carried on some years ago in the pages of "Notes and Queries," some people denying, and making the Duke deny, that he had ever used such an expression. One correspondent—"C"—made a statement on the face of it the most authentic and reasonable, but which being contradicted, he wrote again as follows: "It will, I hope, close all debate on this anecdote, to state that the account I gave of it was from the Duke himself." The account alluded to being as follows: "It was at all times the Duke of Wellington's habit to cover as much as possible troops exposed to the fire of cannon, by taking advantage of any irregularity of ground, and making them sit or lie down, the better to cover them from fire till the moment of attack; and the Duke's common practice was, just as the enemy came close and was on the point of attacking him, he attacked them. What he may have said on this occasion, and *probably did say*, was, "Stand up, Guards;" and then gave the commanding officers the order to attack. One would not pledge oneself to the very syllables of such a command on such an occasion; but what I have stated is the recollection of one who was present, and it is *equivalent* to the popular version of "Up, Guards, and at them!"—"Notes and Queries," vol. V., 425-6.

Now that we know this was the Duke's recollection of the matter, it cannot be gainsaid, and the anecdote just recorded confirms "C.'s" statement as far as the lying down of the troops is concerned.

Let us crown our month's "Notabilia" with the coronation-day of that good Queen who has sanctified her high position by the example of the holiest domestic virtues and affections. June 28, 1838, Queen Victoria crowned.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!